

"A Fair Chance for the Girls": A Case Study  
in the Function of Prestige in the Controversy  
Over Admission of Women to Tufts College, 1852-1912

A professional project presented to the  
faculty of the School of Theology at  
Claremont in partial fulfillment for the  
requirements of the degree Doctor of Ministry

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*This professional project, completed by*

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty  
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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## ABSTRACT

Essential to human behavior, be it individual or group, is esteem. This project explores how the need for esteem determined the course of history in the controversy over the admission of women to Tufts College, Medford, Massachusetts. Examination of Board meeting minutes, letters, denominational records and other primary sources as well as secondary sources uncovered motives for prestige needs that resulted in the exclusion of women.

In 1852 Tufts College was chartered, the first to be founded by Universalists. The next year Universalists meeting at the state convention began officially to advocate that women be admitted to its denominationally-sponsored institutions of higher learning. The religiously liberal denomination continued to pressure Tufts to admit women; nevertheless, the College excluded women students for forty years. In its male-only status, Tufts was unique among Universalist academies, seminaries, colleges, and universities. This project examines that discrepancy.

In 1892 Tufts became coeducational. Then, eighteen years later, the College segregated women by establishing Jackson College for Women in 1910. Equality in education was made secure only through coordinate system whereby students shared the same facilities but were separated in classes by sex.

Chapter 1 evaluates the claim of a contemporary witness that the fathers of the denomination were responsible for creating a male-only college. Chapter 2 traces the struggle for coeducation and finds the charge specious made by opponents that opening the College to women would prove economically infeasible. Chapter 3 examines tensions within the denomination, revealing an ambivalence toward women in higher education that worked to push the College toward conformance with the New England pattern of private, male-only higher education.

The project concludes by focusing on what Tufts as an intellectual center located in prestigious New England meant for Universalists: a symbol of acceptance in the religious community and opportunity for social advancement heretofore not possible. Tufts' aligning itself with prestige structures within the New England community helped assure its survival and the continuance of Universalist heritage and its hopes for the future.

## INTRODUCTION

The problem of translating principles into appropriate deeds probably has been with humankind since the development of conscience. Why is it a given action we may perform and indeed repeat may be counter to the principles we hold dear? Why then do we consume energy and time constructing strategies that support our actions even when they are in opposition to our beliefs and principles when it would be simpler to alter our actions so they coincide with our belief systems?

The scope of the aforementioned questions is the outer framework for this project. Among the multitude of diverse responses, there is one that will provide an inner framework upon which attention will be focused. In certain social situations, the need for prestige plays a major role. This project will attempt to explore the problem of prestige in a given situation; how prestige functions to control/inhibit/enable social progress, particularly that which germinates in a theological setting.

As we human beings are social animals, we need the approval of others. Without approval, we are discontent, alienated, or bitter. Approval is what prestige is about. It provides us psychological support. Prestige also functions to open doors to the achievement of individual and group goals, and contrarily, it operates to ignore, resist, or cancel them. Prestige may coincide with or be in opposi-

tion to the accepted beliefs and principles of an individual or a group.

By "prestige" I am using Goode's definition: "The esteem, respect, or approval that is granted by an individual or a collectivity for performance or qualities that are considered above average."<sup>1</sup> I will also use the term "prestige structure" as defined by Ortner and Whitehead meaning "the sets of prestige positions or levels that result from a particular line of social evaluation, the mechanisms by which individuals and groups arrive at given levels or positions, and the overall conditions of reproduction of the system of statuses."<sup>2</sup>

Prestige is a control process that functions in all groups of people from social organizations to nations. No group is exempt. It operates in the life of church communities and in denominational institutions. It matters not what ideology or style is present--prestige is there in any on-going social interaction--whether the group is high or low in rank, formal or informal in structure. In a given situation, what are the processes by which prestige works to enable/deter a group from achieving its goals? When those goals are conflicted, how does prestige influence and persuade? How are the needs for prestige perpetuated? Does prestige relate to gender? If so, how? Finally, what factors can penetrate and overcome prestige needs?

This project is a recognition of a phenomenon that has rarely been addressed in a theological context. We know it



exists because we all experience it, but we rarely explore how we use it, what we stand to gain from it, what we lose from using it. Our aim as participants in church related institutions is to accept individuals unconditionally, for our purpose is to proclaim the Good News of liberation to ever-increasing numbers of individuals gathered in community to hear and act upon that message. The message and the process, in theory at least, is inclusive. On the other hand, prestige, a process in which we all participate as selective human beings, works to organize and set apart. Prestige, therefore, often presents a contrary mode to the Christian message, complicating the goings-on of the community.

This project also recognizes that prestige as a force can work to persuade and move the community when individuals and groups utilize it. Prestige as embodied in leaders and elder members is frequently invoked to achieve such goals as increased membership and funds. When prominent individuals sanction an endeavor, more often than not there is a ready response. We like adding our names to those whom we admire. We gain prestige in the process, and the project stands a likely chance of success. Contrarily, prestige may work to stifle the work of the group, as when the elders are indifferent or refuse to give approval. If their voices are loud or silent long enough, and the loudness or silence is deemed significant, whatever is being promoted can be effectively stopped. We may participate in the process of

prestige as a negative force when we cooperate with the status quo, when we defend tradition, or in other ways use past or present structures to block what is being moved forward.

The attempt in these limited pages will be to confront and learn something about how one liberal denomination and an affiliated institution with prestige needs clashed--how a dichotomy emerged between what was preached by the denomination and what was practiced by the institution identified with the denomination. How did it happen that an institution within a denomination which prides itself on its liberalism did not practice the liberalism expected of it? What happens when a religious body, in attempting to widen its self-understanding through the implementation of policy, finds itself impeded by the biases of some of its important leaders who do not share its wider view? As an institution is those who identify and participate with it as well as those who administer it, what is our role as part of the institution when we perceive it taking a direction contrary to its principles? What is a theologically sound response which, while recognizing the power of prestige, works to lift up the integrity of the institution?

The particular setting of the project which provides a study of prestige is Tufts College, Medford, Massachusetts, during its beginnings in mid-nineteenth century on up through the early part of this century. Chartered in 1852 and opened in 1854, Tufts was the first major institution of

higher education affiliated with the Universalist denomination. While the Universalists were closely identified with social change, and in the case before us, pushed for higher education for women, Tufts remained an all-male institution until 1892, forty years after it had been chartered. This was unusual in that at the time of Tufts' opening, there were already sixteen Universalist coeducational academies and seminaries<sup>3</sup> and this precedent would continue for the establishment of colleges and universities shortly after Tufts' opening on up to the early '70's. Tufts is the only exception among all the Universalists-affiliated institutions that admitted women on the day of opening.<sup>4</sup>

Further, even though the state Universalist convention resolved in 1855 that Tufts "consider the propriety of opening it to both sexes alike and awarding its honors according to proficiency in study, irrespective of sex,<sup>5</sup> and even though Universalist parents wanted their daughters to attend Tufts in preference to Vassar and other schools, the administration of the College managed to keep women out for a considerable number of years. Given the pressure for coeducation within the denomination, given the movement toward equal rights for women in the larger liberal political community with whom Universalists were often identified, the establishment of a men-only college affiliated with Universalists is a clear deviation, not in keeping with the aims and purposes of the denomination. Forces outside the purview of the denomination, therefore, must have influenced

the decision-makers at Tufts not to admit women in the early decades, and later, to segregate them. The thesis of this project is, therefore, that the need for prestige played a major part in the prohibition and subsequent segregation of women students at Tufts College from 1852 to 1912.

This project affords opportunity to explore the workings of prestige in a particular theological setting. It invites us to theologize about prestige. We all need self esteem; without it we cannot grow. The same is true for an institution. When prestige works to move us forward at the expense of the inclusion of others, however, we in the theological community must ask ourselves where we fit in the prestige structures that are operating. Are they in opposition to or in collusion with other forces, particularly forces for or against social change? How do we participate in prestige as it interplays with roles, gender, and/or states of dominance and submission? How do we balance prestige needs with other needs?

How we are with each other is a theological issue. Our humanity is our theology, for in thinking of the meaning of our existence we begin with ourselves. This project, in exploring issues and dimensions of prestige and gender will also aim to illumine sources of human good that transcend needs for exclusivity and status.

This project has entailed the use of the usual methods of library research in investigating secondary sources. For primary sources, I have done on site research at Tufts' Nils

Yngve Wessell Library University archives examining minutes of trustees' meetings, other administrative proceedings, letters, the Jackson College file, and student publications. For making the files readily available, for photocopying, and for fulfilling requests made by telephone and correspondence as well as offering helpful comments, I am indebted to Robert Johnson-Lally, Assistant Archivist at Tufts' University, and his courteous assistant, Barbara Tringali. For helpful direction and information, particularly regarding Tufts' relationship to the denomination, I am grateful to Russell E. Miller, Tufts University Historian and Archivist, whose writings on Universalist women in higher learning incorporated in his comprehensive work on Universalist history, The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870 provided the inspiration for this project. Thanks also to Alan Seaburg, Curator of Manuscripts, Andover-Harvard Theological Library, for providing denominational convention records and journal articles.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> William J. Goode, The Celebration of Heroes: Prestige as a Social Control System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) pp. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (eds.), Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Gail Bambrick and Theresa Pease, "The Women of Tufts," Tufts Criterion, 17:2 (Winter 1985) 15.

<sup>4</sup> Russell E. Miller, The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870 (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1979) p. 540.

<sup>5</sup> Records of Proceedings of the Massachusetts Convention of Universalists, Lynn, MA, June 6, 1855.

## CHAPTER I

## THE STRUGGLE FOR COEDUCATION BEGINS

Lydia A. Jenkins, a leader in the denomination outside New England, noted that because "The Universalist denomination is professedly and acknowledgedly large-minded and liberal,...it was everywhere expected that its college should be established on a broad and generous basis."<sup>1</sup> Jenkins pointed out that because there were less liberal-minded institutions admitting women, Universalist women, proud of their liberal heritage, expected Tufts, of all schools, to be open to them. She claimed that Universalist women as a body

rejoiced, saying to ourself, at last the desire of our heart is to be gratified. In anticipation we saw gathered beneath its protecting roof the daughters as well as the sons of Universalist parents and patrons. Many of these daughters we had heard express earnest desires to embrace opportunities for an education, compared with which the meagre means they then possessed were but as the vestibule to the lofty cathedral. Some even commenced a course of preparation, sanguine in the belief that they would be willingly admitted. Tufts College was established and its portals opened. But alas! for our hopes, they opened not for woman! Some turned their steps to Antioch, Lima, or Oberlin, finding in partialistic institutions a freedom and liberality which they in vain looked for in one professing the broad views of universal enlargement. Some are waiting still; others have given up the effort and the expectation...<sup>2</sup>

Writing many years later, Mary A. Livermore confirmed Jenkins' point about Universalist hopes for admission of women to Tufts stating that while the public was against



college education for women, both Universalist clergymen and laymen held the "very general expectation" that Tufts would admit both sexes.<sup>3</sup>

President Capen himself stated to a Boston Globe reporter upon announcing Tufts' decision to admit women in 1892 that when the college opened in 1854, there was a "strong movement in favor of co-education, but for some reason, it failed to accomplish anything."<sup>4</sup>

Yet there were those who spoke out for coeducation at Tufts. Thomas A. Sawyer, president of newly formed St. Lawrence University and pioneer advocating coeducation, stated in 1856 at Tufts' first anniversary celebration that the "separation of the sexes...was...a relic of monastic institutions". Women, he felt deserve the same opportunities for higher education as men. As Universalists were "unfettered with the old systems of education," should not they take the lead in allowing women to pursue the same studies in the same institutions as men?<sup>5</sup>

A year after the school was chartered in 1852, Universalists in Massachusetts attending the state convention at Newburyport heard a resolution recommending the admission of females in its institutions of higher learning. It failed. The important thing here is that the matter was brought up and recorded.<sup>6</sup>

The matter was brought up again at the next convention a few months before opening day with a more direct reference to the College, as yet unnamed in the resolution. The

measure favored "the opening of our highest literary institutions to females". "Literary" refers to Tufts as it was from the beginning a liberal arts college. The resolution, however, was introduced near the close of the session. With insufficient time for discussion, it was tabled.<sup>7</sup>

The next state convention finally passed a resolution calling for the admission of women at Tufts: "...that the convention recommend that the government of the Institution known as Tufts College in arranging the basis of its operations consider the propriety of opening it to both sexes alike, and of awarding its honors according to proficiency in study irrespective of sex."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, three successive official Universalist state bodies addressed the issue preceding and succeeding the opening of Tufts; nevertheless, it was established as an all male college.

According to Jenkins, the reason Tufts did not admit women was that

a limited minority of conservative minds, whose claim was to be fathers in the denomination (and whose unsurpassed labors for the upbuilding of liberal Christianity and unremitting interest in its welfare entitled them to be so regarded), could see nothing but chaos, ruin, destruction, in the mingling of the sexes in the halls for highest culture.<sup>9</sup>

Could the matter be as straight-forward as Jenkins described it? Was it true that while Universalists supported higher education for women, a small core of male

denominational leaders whose vision was narrower than other Universalists were the final arbitrators of who was to be admitted to Tufts and who not? This chapter will attempt to examine Jenkins' claim by first looking at the principals to whom Jenkins alludes, the founders of Tufts, the men who determined the character and direction of the College from its beginning, including the composition of the student body. It will then give attention to their denomination and finally their role in shaping the origins of the College.

#### THE FOUNDERS OF TUFTS

The men who established Tufts were leaders in the denomination and in the New England community. Among those most prominent that were voted into office as original trustees on June 16, 1852 were Calvin Gardiner, Benjamin Mussey, Otis A. Skinner, Oliver Dean, Silvanus Packard, Thomas Whittemore, and Hosea Ballou, 2d.<sup>10</sup> Of this group, Mussey, Skinner, and Whittemore were publishers of denominational journals; Dean and Packard, wealthy businessmen and major financial contributors; and Gardiner and Ballou, well known clergymen who advocated denominationally-sponsored education.

It was Otis A. Skinner who was responsible for obtaining the original subscription for the college.<sup>11</sup> Editor of the Southern Pioneer from 1831-35, Skinner was also one of the original sponsors and trustees of Reading Academy, established in 1843, and was so enthusiastic about the prospects

for the school he arranged to send his daughter there.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps it is not surprising that he went on to serve as president of Lombard College in 1857-59, a coed school since its opening the same year as Tufts.

The second trustee who was a publisher was Benjamin Mussey, of the Universalist which became the Ladies' Repository. Mussey left the publication about when it was decided its content of sermons, moral essays and offering heavy with religious tone was to be broadened to appeal specifically to women.<sup>13</sup>

The third publisher and original trustee of Tufts, Thomas Whittemore (1800-1861), was one of the most outspoken Universalists of his day. A vigorous, self-made man wealthy from interests in railroads, banking, real estate, and publishing, Whittemore was best known for his affiliation with the Trumpet and Universalist<sup>14</sup> magazine. The publication was the first Universalist journal in the United States, first printed in 1819.<sup>15</sup> Whittemore joined the staff in 1822, which consisted of Hosea Ballou, the father of Universalism, and his great nephew, Hosea Ballou, 2d, who was to become Tufts' first president.<sup>16</sup> In 1828, Whittemore became sole editor and owner.<sup>17</sup> A convert to Universalism via Hosea Ballou the elder, Whittemore was wholeheartedly dedicated to advancing the cause of Universalism, which he did through airing his opinions on religion and those of his opponents in the Trumpet. While the Trumpet was characterized as the most conservative of Uni-

versalist papers, it was known also for its reliability for denominational coverage and for its popularity as the largest selling religious journal based in Boston. An informed Universalist, a disciplined scholar, and father of eight, Whittemore also wrote a catechism for children and a Modern History of Universalism, from the Reformation on, succeeding the volume of "Ancient" Universalist history Ballou the elder wrote. Also a candidate for the Massachusetts legislature in 1831 representing Cambridge, Whittemore was the chief mover in separating church from state in 1833.<sup>18</sup>

Elected president of the college by the trustees was Hosea Ballou, 2d, well known for clearly articulating the educational needs of the denomination, a visionary who was instrumental in keeping the idea of Tufts alive before it became a reality.<sup>19</sup> Ballou, interested in education early in his career, served as a member on every educational committee created by Universalist state or national conventions from 1827 on.<sup>20</sup> He was instrumental in establishing Nichols Academy in Dudley, Massachusetts in 1819, the first Universalist educational institution, which also was coeducational upon opening.<sup>21</sup> Ballou, a self-made man, studied theology under the elder Hosea Ballou. After becoming a pastor himself, he trained many others--always boys--in a kind of apprenticeship for the ministry. Many of his students became leaders in the denomination.<sup>22</sup> Ballou also had extensive experience participating in denomina-

tional affairs on all levels for over forty years.<sup>23</sup> As a writer, lecturer, and historian, he was visibly a leader among all Universalists.

One other trustee came aboard who was particularly prominent in the denomination and in the community at large. Joining the Board in 1855, a year after the college opened, was the Rev. Alonzo Ames Miner, destined to become Tufts' second president. Miner was a self-taught educator. He taught public school and served on local and state school boards. Also a preacher known for his eloquence and conservative positions, Miner was active in the denomination from 1838 onward, and an advocate of denominationally sponsored education.<sup>24</sup>

We have seen how the trustees of Tufts were uncommon, self-made men, exemplary in their fields and prominent in Universalism. To gain a fuller picture of who they were in regard to women and higher education, we need to examine their words in the records. Words, like deeds, carry considerable weight when uttered by individuals of importance. This is equally valid for what is not said.

We have a clear statement from Whittemore that coeducation was never brought up at any of the trustees' meetings. Responding to Brother Austin's remark in the Christian Ambassador that he hoped young women would not be excluded at Tufts, Whittemore, on September 9, a month before students began attending classes wrote "There is one fact we can state for the satisfaction of the publication, viz, the

subject of admitting females was never discussed at any meetings we ever attended." He then obfuscated the issue asking Austin why he spoke only of young women, why not middle aged women? Then he passed over the matter by asking if women were to be admitted to the theological school in New York (St. Lawrence) and concluded by denegrating both theological schools and women, saying that in some seminaries "they have made Professors of old grannies."<sup>25</sup>

Whittemore's writings did not deter at least one woman from applying, however. In 1856 a woman from South Reading made application.<sup>26</sup> It was recorded on July 3, but there is no indication what was discussed. It is clear she was never admitted.

One of the few written statements about women is taken from the celebration of the first graduating class in 1857. Whittemore, the speaker, reveals a paternalism in his remarks made before his commencement address. He welcomed everyone, "especially the ladies, who had before smiled on the prospect before them, the clergy, and on their friends in college."<sup>27</sup>

As a possible indicator that Whittemore's paternalistic comments were not well received by others in the denomination, there appeared an article in the Christian Ambassador highly critical of his compliment paid to the ladies. The writer states,

We conceive this circumstance to be exceedingly creditable to the Christian forbearance and liberality of the

ladies of Boston and vicinity, inasmuch as Tufts College closes its doors in the face of all females as students and utterly forbids their enjoying any of the privileges and advantages of education which that institution has been richly endowed to grant. We trust no other college under the auspices of Universalists will imitate Tufts in this narrow policy--this pandering to old foggy prejudices."<sup>28</sup>

The fact that there was pressure on Tufts to admit women from the clergy and other sources, coupled with the received application from a prospective woman student is evidence that the denomination was pushing for equality in education. Yet the trustees were also Universalists. Why were they not inspired to carry out the ideals of higher education for women supported by the denomination? Why were they maintaining the position of the status quo?

To gain a deeper appreciation of who they were, we need to look farther afield--at what it meant to be a Universalist--what the denomination was like, its origins and uniqueness. Understanding how the trustees connected with the larger body, and what tensions were within the larger group that were reflected in their attitudes will help round out our picture of them as Universalists governing the first Universalist college.

### THE ORIGINS AND ETHOS OF UNIVERSALISM

Universalism, a liberal Christian denomination, was born in New England of Puritan origins. As a come-outer movement, its first probable business was to reject Calvinism, which provided the soil for its germination. Rather than



the idea that human beings are predestined to be either saved or damned, Universalists stressed the love of God toward creation, exemplified in the love of Jesus Christ for all humankind. Emphasis was on both the love of God and on the democratization of salvation; it was available for all, not just for the select few. Universalists looked more forward than backward, freer to act in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ as interpreted by the individual believer and separate from the reward/punishment system then prevalent in mainline Protestant thinking.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of universal salvation is now integrated into mainstream Christian doctrines; the Universalist articulation of it at that time, however, was greeted with hostility. Perceived as religiously unacceptable, Universalists were grouped with sceptics, deists, and atheists. They were barred from testifying under oath in legal actions in some states, including Massachusetts and Connecticut, until after 1826.<sup>30</sup> Opposition to the denomination was also expressed by members of the clergy and official ecclesiastical groups.<sup>31</sup> Contacts were frequent and sometimes unpleasant.<sup>32</sup> Universalists often had difficulty in arranging accommodations for meetings and conventions, and their preachers often prevented from speaking as they were seen to represent a religion "subversive of Christianity".<sup>33</sup>

Universalists spent much time and energy, therefore, defending their theology and answering allegations. While

they also disseminated their message in the same manner as other denominations, e.g., publishing "doctrinal" sermons, newspaper editorials, tracts, and public debates - they did something different. They invited to their pulpits and meeting houses the members of other faiths and held special meetings that included Christians of all denominations. While these gestures of outreach gained some converts, Universalists were often rebuffed. This, however, served to strengthen their faith all the more.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, by belief and attitude, Universalism in its early days was marked by its over-against position. On the national level, they did not join forces with other denominational groups supporting such efforts as temperance and abolition,<sup>35</sup> but preferred to pursue an independent course of action which often weakened their efforts. On the local level, however, they cooperated with others in such instances as pulpit exchanges, dedication of churches, and even in the sharing of ownership or usage of buildings.<sup>36</sup>

Universalists were often compared to Unitarians, a like-minded liberal religious group that emerged from the standing-order (Congregational) churches. Both Unitarianism and Universalism were "heretical" in that they rejected trinitarian beliefs, and both were often in the forefront on social issues and reform movements. Here the resemblance ended. Unitarians held onto the claim of a "future punishment"<sup>37</sup> which Universalists not only rejected but openly opposed. Universalist outspokenness often resulted

in persecution to which Unitarians contributed by refusing Universalist invitations to exchange pulpits and share other contacts.<sup>38</sup> Universalists in return, chided Unitarians for not professing their beliefs openly and keeping under the safe cover of the established churches.

These feelings began to dissipate by mid-nineteenth century as Unitarians formed their own congregations apart from the standing-order churches. There were socio-economic and educational differences between Unitarians and Universalists, however, that remained. Unitarianism developed from the established members of New England society and figured prominently in financial, social, cultural, and educational circles. They were wealthy, aristocratic, and esteemed. Their ministers were graduates of Harvard College where they were likely to have been taught by other Unitarians.<sup>39</sup> Universalists, on the other hand, were among the poor, uneducated classes and appeared to be jealous of the social position held by Unitarians, who all the while looked down upon Universalists. Unitarians, according to one Universalist minister, saw themselves in the after life "in an aristocratic heaven, where the parlor, at least, would be reserved for the wealthy, learned, and fashionable of earth."<sup>40</sup> Another Universalist minister said he resented the fact that Unitarians had "assumed that it [Unitarianism] embodies all the learning, refinement, and respectability of the two sects; and that all of the weight of public odium was on the side of Universalism."<sup>41</sup> This attitude was also

reflected by the editors of the Encyclopedia Americana who in 1833 allocated ten columns of information to the Unitarians while providing less than one-third of one column to the Universalists, much of which was incomplete and inaccurate.<sup>42</sup>

Another voice from outside both groups pointed out another difference. Universalists were gaining in members and influence while Unitarians were perceived as too refined, aristocratic, and skeptical to become popular. Universalism was "a much more formidable adversary of truth and righteousness than any other heresy."<sup>43</sup> As a lower class denomination, Universalists competed with Methodists and Wesleyan-oriented Free-Will Baptists for the allegiance of the common people. In the move westward, Universalists were so successful that by 1850 they outnumbered Unitarians two to one.<sup>44</sup> The Seventh US Census (1850) placed Universalists among the twenty-one "major sects" and reported there were 529 churches in twenty-two states.<sup>45</sup> In gaining numerical strength and tenacity in standing up for their convictions, Universalists were proud of their new denomination, and felt triumphant over Unitarians.

Much of Universalist popularity was spawned at first among rebellious and individualistic backcountry New Englanders who were disenchanted with "hell fire and damnation" theology and receptive to the idea of a benevolent Deity. As people of the soil, they were averse to organizations and the building up of a centralized, official body.

Even their language reflected their disdain for organized religion. They named Congregationalists "Orthodox" or "Partialists" and they rejected ecclesiastical terminology, preferring "parish", "society", or "meeting house" to "church," and "preachers" to "clergy".<sup>46</sup>

Popularity among these people brought problems as well as numbers to the denomination. While they were receptive to hearing the Universalist word, they were not willing to help organize a structure that would help spread that word. While they may have defended to the teeth its preaching--and that was where their priorities lay--they did not see the point of formal theological training. These anti-intellectual seeds were sprouted among the very early and very prominent Universalists. Even Hosea Ballou himself distrusted intellectual pursuits and saw no reason why ministers could not continue to be educated through the old system of apprenticeship.<sup>47</sup>

Even after the attacks against their "heretical" faith no longer challenged their resources, Universalists continued to resist organizing and planning for the survival of their denomination. Higher education was seen as a luxury, and theological education as a means of creating an unwanted elite not in keeping with the simplicity and democracy of Universalism.<sup>48</sup> Such leadership would shatter the heart of the faith. As late as the 1840's, the feasibility and desirability of establishing theological schools was still debated.<sup>49</sup>

For men like Ballou and Sawyer who were born and bred in New England where a high premium was placed on education, resistance to formal learning in a movement dependent upon the rigor of intellectual endeavors as well as spiritual development was contradictory. They worried that the denomination could not meet the intellectual demands of come-outers attracted to its message if its "preachers" were essentially uneducated. They felt that for the denomination to gain credence among other religious groups and converts within New England, it had to make itself known in intellectual and social circles. As it was no longer necessary for them to defend their "heresy," they were free to establish a base of credibility which would be seated in places of higher learning. Other groups had their colleges; it was time Universalists had theirs.

These ideas Hosea Ballou, 2d, proceeded to promote before the General Convention on September 5, 1847, in New York City, urging support of both a theological school and a liberal arts college. Intellectual discipline and learning was requisite for the survival of any religious body, and educational institutions were the obvious means for assuring such survival, he told the assembled. Universalist neglect of education had been a disgrace, and there was fear that the best trained minds were deserting the denomination and seeking spiritual stimulation elsewhere.<sup>50</sup>

With this speech the first funds for the college that was to become Tufts were raised. It was not easy, however;

the apathy and resistance to higher education was thick in the air at times. It would be another five years before the College was chartered.

### THE ORIGINS OF TUFTS

Tufts' beginnings, like all Universalist secondary level schools and institutions of higher learning, are found in the denomination's desire that its youth receive an education uncolored by sectarian influences. While not eager to establish their own schools, Universalists felt pushed to do so because of Calvinistic indoctrination and discrimination in other educational institutions and curricula of the times. As we have previously seen, Universalists were largely self-educated, and in the early part of the nineteenth century, suspicious and fearful of book learning and reluctant to support higher education. Nevertheless, arguments for a liberal form of education that stressed the idea that human nature could be perfected instead of being predestined won out as some dozen academies were established before Tufts was chartered in 1852.<sup>52</sup>

The location of the College, on land donated by Charles Tufts, included the highest hill in the vicinity of Boston.<sup>53</sup> This hill in Medford would serve more than a functional purpose: on a symbolic level, the light of learning at Tufts would illumine the community below and at the same time, elevate the position of Universalism. Hosea Ballou, 2d, ignited the light of Tufts when he articulated

these ideas in his Inaugural Address given in 1855: A college "educates and forms...the community at large. "It stands at the head of some of the most important instrumentalities of civilization...as the head to the body of an individual...sending a portion of its knowledge, thoughts, and volitions to the every extremities".<sup>54</sup> In terms of Tufts in particular, the school stands "at the apex in the hierarchy of educational institutions...has charge of giving the highest and most extensive...instruction...makes a multitude of scholars;...sends forth a class of them to act upon the community; that it stamps a valuable reputation on young men who go out into the world, or who enter the professions..." Ballou also said it is good to have such an institution on one's side, in terms of "social respectability and influence."<sup>55</sup>

We are reminded here that Ballou was speaking to an audience of Universalists moving up in the social and economic ladders of New England. While speaking about the ideals of the College--how it benefits society in general--Ballou did not ignore the practical needs of his audience. He made the College available to all classes by promoting the idea that there was social as well as economic gain by receiving a Tufts' education. Recipients would, of course, be men; it would be they who would become the scholars and professionals and enhance the progress of humanity.

Eager to enhance the prestige of the denomination, Ballou said that Tufts would provide an identifiable place



of learning to which men could point with pride. As men associate their own success and reputation with that of the school, the result would advance the learning of Universalists and will raise up the whole denomination "to a higher degree of culture than would have been achieved without it."<sup>56</sup>

Gender was more precisely defined a year earlier by Alonzo A. Miner in his cornerstone speech: "the patronage of the College would be young men in the middle walks of life."<sup>57</sup> Years later, Trustee Thomas A. Whittemore iterated Ballou and Miner and added that the College was also to provide a literary background for men training for the ministry.<sup>58</sup>

At this point it is clear that Jenkins' claim that a small core of Universalist leaders chose to purposefully create a male-only Tufts was correct. Their words and actions are witness to that fact. Yet the picture is complicated by several major factors we have already explored which surface here in the words of Ballou and Miner. The first was the demand to create an institution that would be a beacon shining forth Universalist principles, perfecting the cause of humanity in this new land of opportunity, which would also serve to counter and correct old notions that Universalism and Universalist were religiously and socially unacceptable. The second was the problem of creating an institution in New England where education was a value and a virtue yet generally not supported by practical-minded

Universalists. The selling of the idea of the College even for men only would be a challenge. The third was the problem of competition in the founding of a Universalist college worthy of repute within the proximity of Unitarian-identified Harvard, the epitome of male-only New England higher education. We will keep these factors in mind as we attempt to unravel the problem of why coeducation was such a problem for Tufts.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jenkins was the first woman fellowshipped to preach by the denomination. Russell E. Miller, The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870 (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1979) p. 547. Her article entitled "Female Education in Colleges" is taken from the Christian Ambassador, August 22, 1857, a denominational journal published in New York state.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mary A. Livermore, Story of my Life: Or the Sunshine and Shadows of Seventy Years (Hartford, CT: Worthington, 1897) p. 608.

<sup>4</sup> "Co-ed at Tufts," Christian Leader (July 21, 1892)

<sup>5</sup> Miller, Larger Hope, p. 541, quoted in the Christian Freeman, 18 (September 5 1856) 74. See also Richard Eddy, The Life of Thomas J. Sawyer, S.T.D., L.L.D. and Caroline M. Sawyer (Boston: University Pub. House, 1900) p. 180.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings, Massachusetts State Convention, June 1 and 2, 1853. The measure was put forth by Brother Cravens and discussed at length by Brothers Miner, Streeter, Usher, Brown, Ballou, Parker, Brooks, Emerson, Reed, Talbot, Moore, and others. It is unfortunate there is no record here of what was discussed. Two names will become more familiar as we delve deeper into the project.

<sup>7</sup> Christian Freeman. 16 (July 14, 1854) 42.

<sup>8</sup> Proceedings of the Massachusetts Convention of Universalists, Lynn, Massachusetts, June 6, 1855.

<sup>9</sup> Jenkins.

<sup>10</sup> Records, Minutes of Board of Trustees Meetings; Archives.

<sup>11</sup> Russell E. Miller, Light on the Hill: A History of Tufts College, 1852-1952. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, The Larger Hope. p. 374. We know that Skinner's attitude toward women extended beyond his family, however, for in the same year the school opened, his series of essays entitled "The Influence of Christian Women" was published (see p. 537).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

- 14 Ibid., p. 293-295.
- 15 Ibid., p. 293.
- 16 The "2d" was Ballou's way of distinguishing himself from his great uncle after whom he was named.
- 17 Ibid., p. 295.
- 18 Ibid., pp. 296-297.
- 19 Miller, Light, pp. 31, 33.
- 20 Ibid., p. 34.
- 21 Ibid, p. 9.
- 22 Ibid., p. 16.
- 23 Ibid, p. 17.
- 24 Ibid, pp. 102-104.
- 25 Thomas A. Whittemore, "Are Females to be Admitted into Tufts College?" Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, 36 (September 9, 1854)
- 26 Records, Faculty Minutes, Vol. 1.
- 27 Adams, p. 292.
- 28 "Tufts College and Women," Christian Ambassador (July 25, 1857)
- 29 George Huntston Williams, American Universalism, 3rd Ed. (Boston: Skinner House, 1983) p. 11.
- 30 Russel E. Miller, "Universalism and Sectarian Education Before 1860," The Annual Journal of the Universalist Historical Society, 3 (1962) 32.
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_, Larger Hope. pp. 783-84.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 789-790.
- 33 Ibid., p. 791.
- 34 Ibid., p. 790.
- 35 Perhaps typical of Universalist defensiveness was their rejection to assist the American Bible Society in its inter-denominational effort to distribute bibles. Advising against participation, Thomas Whittemore stated that the

endeavor would only result in dissemination of "orthodoxy".  
Ibid., p. 792.

36 Ibid., p. 792-793.

37 Ibid., p. 797.

38 Ibid., p. 799.

39 Ernest Cassara (ed.) Universalism in America: A Documentary History of Liberal Faith (Boston: Skinner House, 1984) p. 5.

40 Miller, p. 798, quoted in Trumpet 37 (February 16, 1856) 147.

41 Ibid., p. 801, quoted in Stephen R. Smith, Historical Sketches and Incidents, Illustrative of the Establishment and Progress of Universalism in the State of New York. 2 Vols. (Buffalo: Leavitt, 1848) pp. 194-196.

42 Miller, p. 801.

43 Ibid. Quoted in the Universalist Expositor/n.s. 40 (July 1833) 276-77.

44 Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981) p. 163.

45 Miller, Light, p. 164.

46 Ibid., p. 5.

47 Ibid., p. 29.

48 \_\_\_\_\_, Larger Hope, p. 417.

49 \_\_\_\_\_, "Universalism and Sectarian Education Before 1860," p. 33.

50 Ibid, p. 70.

51 Ibid., p. 23.

52 Ibid., p. 9.

53 \_\_\_\_\_, Light, pp. 46-48.

54 Hosea Ballou 2d. "Inaugural Address at the Opening of Tufts College." August 22, 1855. Universalist Quarterly 12 (October 1855) 332.

55 Ibid., p. 331.

. 56 Ibid., pp. 337-339.

57 Universalist Magazine, 26 (August 6, 1853)

58 John Greenleaf Adams, Memoir of Thomas Whittemore, D.D., (Boston: Universalist Pub. House, 1878) p. 275.

## CHAPTER II

## THE STRUGGLE FOR COEDUCATION CONTINUES

The previous chapter provided an introduction to some of the tensions emerging from the origins of Universalism in New England that may have complicated the shaping of Tufts by coloring the decision-making of the trustees. They, acting by themselves, determined who could attend Tufts and who could not. When attempts were articulated by those outside its portals to broaden the student composition to include women, the founders had no ears to hear. Different voices expressing different views were heard at the state conventions and in the denominational press during Tufts' beginning years. Thereafter, however, they were subdued until the early '70's. This was no doubt due in large part to the upheaval of the Civil War and to the leadership of Alonzo A. Miner, Tufts' second president (1862-1875) who worked to inculcate the traditional views of the founders to which he was witness during his time of office as an early trustee.<sup>1</sup>

## FORCES FOR CHANGE MEET COUNTERFORCES

All was not to remain quiet, however. In 1865 Dean Academy was established on a coeducational basis in Franklin, Massachusetts, as a preparatory school for Tufts. Again we see the expectation that Tufts would become coeducational. In 1870 Dean began a collegiate program for women

only, separate from the existing coeducational academy. As the curriculum relied on the same one used by Tufts, it was felt that it was foolish that both Dean and Tufts, only fifty miles apart, should duplicate one another.<sup>2</sup> Denominational writers pressured Tufts to admit women. Segregated education was described as an "old fossilized idea of herding only men together for educational purposes [that was] inaugurated before the education of the other sex was regarded as indispensable."<sup>3</sup> Yet no organized effort was raised to support coeducation at Tufts. Further pressure from Dean Academy to admit women at Tufts met silent resistance.<sup>4</sup>

Then at the 1873 Massachusetts convention, Mrs. E.M. Bruce (Elizabeth Hurd)<sup>5</sup> proposed four resolutions: that the convention disclaim any responsibility for backwardness in public opinion; that the Universalists leaders were forerunners in promoting coeducation; a denial of which was "a violation of the theories, declarations, and convictions of Universalists"; and that appropriate provision needed to be made for women at Tufts in the near future.<sup>6</sup> These resolutions were tabled for the following year, one was to be tabled indefinitely and three were only to go down to defeat in response to a lengthy speech calling for the continuation of male-only status given by President Miner.<sup>7</sup>

In 1875, the Rev. Elmer H. Capen, an alumnus of 1860, was elected president upon Miner's resignation. Capen, while respectful of the conservative ideals of the founders,



was not dependent upon their vision. A denominational leader and minister who served a parish in Providence, Rhode Island, Capen was not party to years of Board deliberations and actions of his predecessors. Further, as his major goal was to transform the College into a university,<sup>8</sup> he was eager to increase enrollment as well as classes and departments. It is not surprising, therefore, that it was he who made the first official move toward coeducation. This occurred in 1883,<sup>9</sup> eight years after he assumed the presidency and ten years before the policy was adopted. By this time, at least 52% of colleges nation-wide were co-educational,<sup>10</sup> most of the good colleges and universities in the West were coeducational and closer to home, Boston University had been admitting women on an equal basis for fourteen years. The "Annex," an example of coordinate education, at nearby Harvard Yard even offered classes and certificates for women who completed four years of study.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Capen approached the problem cautiously, aware that the Tufts' staff and associates held diverse views. A survey among students, alumni, and faculty verified this.<sup>12</sup>

Despite Capen's support for women's admission, a committee of the Board voted it down in 1885, ostensibly because of lack of facilities and funds. A minority report of one was given by Trustee Wilmot L. Warren who claimed that the financial argument was specious, that, in fact, admission of women would be all income and no outlay, unlike the admission of the divinity students who were accepted without

charge. As women "brought the quid pro quo--both in endowment and tuitions," it was a breach of trust and a strike against human progress not to admit them.<sup>13</sup>

Three years prior to the admission of women, a significant interchange occurred in the denominational press between a member of the clergy and a long-standing trustee and attorney for the College. The interchange touched upon points raised in the controversy that raged nationwide over women in higher education.<sup>14</sup> Examining their arguments may illumine some of the issues during these years.

At the 1889 Commencement dinner, the speaker was Trustee Charles Robinson, who had served on the Board since 1857. Robinson referred derogatorily to a minister who stated to his congregation he planned to withhold funds from Tufts until it opened for women. Robinson defended the Board's policy, stating that while the trustees may want to admit women, "their hands are tied to the wishes of those who established the institution...Let us uphold the College on its historic foundation, and put on annexes when we have the funds for doing so--when we can do so and not put the college in peril".<sup>15</sup>

The Rev. E.L. Rexford, graduate of St. Lawrence, trustee and former president of Buchtel College, and staunch supporter of coeducation at Tufts, was the minister to whom Robinson had referred. Rexford attacked Robinson's point that the trustees' hands are tied, that the donors did not intend to have their money used for women, asked for names

of those who allegedly expressed these sentiments, and challenged the notion that Tufts had no means to open its doors to women. "The deficiency is in the will and in the justice and generosity and sufficient freedom from old college traditions to do it," he wrote. Lastly, he attacked the idea of an "annex" built for women, asking the trustee if he had built one for his house when his daughter was born.<sup>16</sup>

Robinson answered the charge by invoking Tufts' esteemed fathers under "whose care the school was placed and without whom...there would have been no such vital and progressive Christian sect" as Universalism. The College had been conducting its business all along according to the purpose set forth by its fathers: to serve young men. The trustees were to uphold the original intent. To use any funds for the education of women would be a breach in faith. No offer of finances had ever been encouraged, declared or refused for the education of women. The funds that came in were from those who in their lifetime wanted to see the College stay as it had been. To provide their funds for women after they were gone would be to have gone against the wishes of their soul. Further, "the founders...did not close...doors to women...nor the trustees. The doors simply have not been opened to them. Such an action...means something more than the mere swinging of its portals." In conclusion, regarding the issue of separation in space for women apart from men, Robinson commented that "well-to-do parents...not only have

a place in the home for the little stranger, but ample food and clothing for her needs. It would hardly be right or Christian for the parents of the little girl to take by force, or wrongfully, the food or clothing provided by others out of their goodness and benevolence for some little boy, and crowd him out of his home and advantages..."<sup>17</sup>

The following year Robinson died. He had served as president of the trustees, was a prominent attorney and for years provided legal advice to the College without charge. Several benefactors of the College also retained him as counsel.<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting that two years after Robinson's death the trustees, without apparent controversy voted to open the College to women in the undergraduate departments "on the same terms and conditions as men."<sup>19</sup> The language is significant, for it unequivocally means equal education. This was not how key institutions of higher learning in the East educated women at this time. As we discovered in Chapter I, the important schools were exclusively for men. After the Civil War, women's colleges were established, but their reputation for lower academic standards often deterred serious students from attending. Pressure was then put on male-only colleges to accept women. Harvard, modelling itself after English universities, began offering examinations in 1874 and class instruction in 1879 by Harvard professors off campus in the "Annex." Women were separated from the men in terms of curriculum and classes, but pro-

vided the same academic standards.<sup>20</sup> This compromise between separate education and coeducation came to be called coordinate education. Radcliffe, the former "Annex," was affiliated to Harvard and Barnard to Columbia in this manner. Tufts, however, after forty years of resistance, chose to accept women unconditionally. Considering its options, the choice of coeducation was the most radical. Tufts joined Williams, Wesleyan, Bates, and Boston University, the exceptions that adopted coeducation among the larger eastern institutions.

There are no records indicating discussion about the merits of coeducation versus the more accepted pattern of coordinate education among the trustees. We can only speculate how the decision was made. That the College chose the former must, to a considerable degree, be attributed to the influence of President Capen. His interpretation of the success of coeducation elsewhere in the country and its significance in expressing denominational ideals must have been instrumental.

In support of the trustees' decision, and in response to President Capen's call for financial support from those friendly toward coeducation, Cornelia M. Jackson, educator and supporter of equal rights for women made her will, bequeathing to Tufts College \$70,000 to provide the facilities and instruction for women.<sup>21</sup> In keeping with the conditions of the will, the trustees established the Cornelia M. Jackson Professorship of Political Science,

effective in 1898-1899. It is ironic, however, that the Jackson will, representing the largest single contribution to further equal opportunity in education for women at Tufts, was used to segregate women some years later.

That women accepted the challenge of higher education is clearly seen by the increase in enrollment: in 1892-1893 ten enrolled; 1893-1894, 22; 1894-1895, 39; in the Spring of 1896, there were 56. By 1900 there were 99. The women students were not only doing well numerically, but also were more than holding their own academically. While there were only six women in the academic course in the class of 1897, four distinguished themselves in scholarship.<sup>22</sup>

President Capen felt vindicated. Enrollment was good, the presence of women had not been disruptive, in fact, the tone of the classroom was elevated and the social life of the College made more agreeable and wholesome.<sup>23</sup>

While female enrollment more than doubled three times in six years, from 10 students to 97, male enrollment was slower, from 58 in 1891-1892, the year before women were admitted, to 259 in 1898,<sup>24</sup> doubling itself more than twice. In other words, women had gone from being about one-sixth or seventeen percent, to over a fourth or twenty-seven percent of the undergraduate student body. The decrease in male enrollment in comparison with the ever-increasing female enrollment was perceived as a serious problem, aggravated by the number of women who took awards and prizes. By this

time women as a group had become less a curiosity and more a competitor.

The term "anti-coeducation" began to be used in the student publication<sup>25</sup> at the same time the trustees released a study which appeared to prove that the institution was not popular with prospective male students in preparatory schools because women were admitted. While the idea of segregated education, with women having their own classrooms and facilities was considered, it was ultimately rejected as too costly. Further, no one wanted the College to return to the days prior to women's presence in the classroom. The trustees concluded that the reason why men were not attending Tufts needed to be sought elsewhere--in the College's advertising methods. Tufts simply was not known outside Universalist circles. An attempt was then made to initiate and advertise programs especially attractive to men.<sup>26</sup>

The next decade was a frustrating one for the College. President Capen's successor, Dr. Frederick Hamilton, attributed all of the College's financial losses to coeducation. He flooded the local press with articles against the policy, he promoted the idea that prejudices against women at Tufts were too strong to dismiss, and he spread fears for the future of the liberal arts college if it were to remain coeducational.<sup>27</sup> There seems to be some justification for Hamilton's concerns, for the enrollment issue apparently

became a crisis in 1907 when women made up almost 70% of the liberal arts students and male enrollment was down.<sup>28</sup>

Tufts' experience of decreased male enrollment along with increased women in attendance, male flight from courses popular with women students, and male resentment and envy of women's high achievements were not unusual in coeducational institutions at the turn of the century. A general reaction against coeducation which surfaced throughout the country was referred to as the "feminization" of education, and led in some institutions to a change in policy called segregation, resulting in a division of the sexes into separate classes in some or all departments. Often where a dominant president favored segregation, such as at the Universities of Chicago, Wisconsin, and Washington, it was adopted for a period of time on the freshmen and sophomore levels and in some Liberal Arts courses. In many cases, it was a transition step toward the establishment of a coordinate college.<sup>29</sup> This was the case at Tufts.

Student reaction at the turn of the century at Tufts was mixed. There were "coed haters, lovers, and tolerators," with the tolerators being in the majority.<sup>30</sup> Tufts men were critical of Wesleyan men who were actively demonstrating for the removal of women from campus<sup>31</sup>, which was achieved in 1900.<sup>32</sup> There was never any evidence of this level of antagonism at Tufts.

In 1909, four years after Hamilton's campaign to initiate segregation, a committee of the trustees studied



the issue with greater resolve.<sup>33</sup> A lengthy report was presented in April, 1910, wherein it was made clear that there was a consensus for a segregated policy. Basic reasons were the following:

- 1) the "delicacy of treating some subjects in mixed classes;
- 2) different viewpoints of men and women require a different approach for each sex, which is too much to address in the limited time allotted to classes;
- 3) a natural diffidence on the part of each sex to enter into opposing sides during recitation;
- 4) the tendency of women to choose subjects that they do well in plus their general desire to do well places them consistently above men in class standing, which puts them in a better position to take honors and prizes. Men feel out-classed and their incentive is weakened.<sup>34</sup>

Sentiment expressed for segregation came from "sundry students" and alumni in addition to faculty. Though there was no hostility expressed between the sexes, women were perceived as "an alien element".<sup>35</sup>

The statistics attached to the report indicated a loss of 15% enrollment in comparison with New England's men's colleges, Bowdoin, William, Amherst.<sup>36</sup> The economic evidence appeared weighted against coeducation, and the ratio of the sexes was imbalanced. "Women had done their work too well, if anything."<sup>37</sup>

Resolutions were unanimously recommended and adopted that aimed to make segregation "full and complete". This meant standards for women would not be lowered, there would

still be equal opportunity for women, but they would be educated within a separate college, Jackson College for Women, which would have its own officers and faculty.<sup>38</sup> In June, 1910, Tufts coeducational policy came to an end with the chartering of Jackson College.<sup>39</sup> In the fall, eighty-five students were enrolled, including the fifty-four from the previously coeducational liberal arts college.<sup>40</sup> Segregation was established.

It did not materialize, however, in the manner in which President Hamilton envisioned. He advocated total segregation--division of men and women in all classes, departments, and facilities, even chapel.<sup>41</sup> While a dean and fifteen new faculty members were hired, very little ultimately was done in the matter of segregating curriculum or academic facilities.<sup>42</sup> After Hamilton resigned in 1912, segregation as official policy distinguished by separate classes disappeared. There was no more talk of separate buildings. Nevertheless, a coordinate administrative structure was set up that flourished.<sup>43</sup> Tufts with its new coordinate college, Jackson College for Women, had become like most of the other New England colleges once again.

#### ANALYSIS

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the issue of admission of women to Tufts was met with resistance and rejection on the basis of perceived lack of funds. While this point is challenged from time to time, and while

there may have been other objections, the major one voiced is the cost factor. It deserves exploration.

We begin by recognizing that financial problems haunted all colleges at this time. Many failed to survive. Prior to the Civil War, more colleges were founded than the number of students could support.<sup>44</sup> Tufts was no exception to these struggling new institutions. Ballou, writing to his brother, laments the lack of students:

College is about as usual. Our numbers don't increase as I hoped. Probably about the same numbers this year as last; there ought to be more. It makes me feel rather sad, and disappointed; though, thus far, we have, on the whole, been favored in comparison with most of our other colleges at their outset. But I don't like the symptom of non-patronage, in the fewness of applicants. I do not know but that it is natural it should be so; -- that we must live long enough to establish some reputation, before we have reason to expect a flocking in. At all events, we work hard enough to merit success.<sup>45</sup>

When Miner took the presidency in 1862, the financial situation seemed desperate. The College was \$18,000 in debt and increasing its indebtedness about \$5,000 per year. What saved the College then was the generosity of Miner's School Street parish in Boston who voted to support his salary while he committed himself to the work of the College. This arrangement lasted over three years.<sup>46</sup>

Thus the College had financial problems before coeducation was even considered. As we learned, President Miner's salary was subsidized by the Second Universalist Society of Boston for three years. Enrollment was a persistent issue. President Capen referred to diminishing enrollment over the

increase expected in almost every one of his annual reports<sup>47</sup> prior to the admission of women. Later, Hamilton saw the problem in terms of decreased male enrollment as compared with that of male-only institutions where enrollment was up. Income did not meet his expectations. The financial crisis under Hamilton was not as serious as the one Miner faced. While the College may not have had the income male-only schools had, it did not have to shoulder the debt incurred under the first two presidents.

Thus the issue of economics surfaced again. Seen as the issue that kept women out in 1885, e.g., lack of funds for housing and other facilities, now it was used to push women out. Both then and now the economics argument was specious. Among other factors, economics worked to open the doors to women in the first place. Once it was realized that special facilities did not need to be built, women were seen to be an economic resource: they paid their own way. President Capen's reports after women were admitted supported this claim. Even President Capen, however, began to worry about the increasing imbalance between the numbers of men and women, and in his annual report for 1901-02, he spoke to the need for a separate building for the exclusive use of women that could have been financed by the Jackson bequest.<sup>48</sup> From the record, however, it would appear that his concern reflected more a desire to comply with the wishes of Cornelia Jackson to provide equal education for women at Tufts than a need to change the system into one of segrega-

tion. Capen's idea of success for the College lay in its expansion to a university and in its inclusion of women.

Hamilton had different expectations and ideas about success. For him, Tufts was still a man's school--one that invited women in as guests of higher education, not as participants, and not in high numbers. Men should continue to dominate in every way. Gender, in Hamilton's eyes, was all important in terms of Tufts identity and self-understanding.

Had sheer funds been the sole determining factor, the trustees would have somehow found it acceptable for the Liberal Arts College to have become an all women's institution as women's enrollment continued to increase. One Boston newspaper even speculated that the College could become a girls college.<sup>49</sup> Given the leadership of the institution and the importance of maintaining its image of a traditional New England college male in character, it would have been impossible for the school to have changed its gender orientation, however. The problem became how to maintain the level of male support without excluding women--how to vision a future that included women without giving up the hold of the past? In Hamilton's view, segregation was the only option.

Not everyone applauded the coming of segregation to Tufts. The editor of the Boston Advertiser pointed out that coeducation was working in the West and it would be unfortunate to see it a failure in the East. "We have many good colleges for men and many for women. Tufts has occupied an

unusual position as a coeducational institution, and New England has taken some pride in its unusualness..."<sup>50</sup>

The fact remains, however, that Tufts also perceived itself in a marketing situation vying for students among keen competition. That it was not keeping up with perceived expectations and the male-only schools was felt a failure, rather than a reflection of an auspicious beginning. Many men, while attracted to Tufts initially, chose not to attend because of the presence of women.<sup>51</sup> This rejection was a major concern of the trustees, for their goal, as is true for the trustees of any institution, was to build confidence and esteem in the school. A good reputation is a college's greatest asset.<sup>52</sup> That Tufts was not popular among male students was a troublesome problem indeed.

The trustees were not alone in their concern. Alumni and students were anxious as well. Yet, while there was resentment by male students and some alumni toward women's achievements, there was no serious agitation of a movement against coeducation<sup>53</sup> until Hamilton came to office. From his first annual report in 1906-07, he dedicated himself to free men from the "potentially harmful exposure to women" and to restore "a man's Tufts" to the Hill.<sup>54</sup>

It is appropriate now to ask where the denomination was in the matter during these years and why it did not offer Tufts more direction toward broader and more humane goals.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Miner stated upon his inauguration "Our work is not revolutionary, but regenerative. We have not founded here a New School in Science and Literature, but a new instrumentality for the furtherance of the Old Schools. We pay our homage to the older institutions..." Universalist Quarterly 19 (July 1862) 293.

<sup>2</sup> Russell E. Miller, The Light on the Hill A History of Tufts College 1852-1952 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) pp. 164-165.

<sup>3</sup> "A College for Women in Massachusetts", Christian Leader (1870)

<sup>4</sup> The records of the Jackson coeducational file contain correspondence from Godfrey Rider to Dr. A. Miner, April 24, 1871, requesting a professor at Tufts hear his granddaughter give recitations to prove her worthiness for a college course in education. (Correspondence, Jackson coeducational file.) Also still in existence is a letter from J.P. Weston, a faculty member at Dean, to Dr. Miner, dated June 10, 1872, recommending two women senior members of Dean Academy for Tufts, "Shall they offer themselves for examination next week?" he asks of Miner. There is no reply on file. (Archives, Wessell Library, Tufts University)

<sup>5</sup> A graduate of of Clinton Liberal Institute, Ingham University, and Antioch, Elizabeth Hurd Bruce later was ordained a minister. Hitchings, Catherine F., "Universalist and Unitarian Women Ministers," Journal of the Universalist Historical Society 10 (1975) 34.

<sup>6</sup> Proceedings, Massachusetts State Convention, 1873.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> Elmer H. Capen, "The American University". The Inaugural Address, Occasional Addresses (Medford, MA: Tufts College Press, 1902) pp. 1-39.

<sup>9</sup> President's Report, 1882-1883, pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States, II (New York: Science Press, 1929) p. 252.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

12 The results of the student and alumni polls were published in the Tuftonian. The students were counted by class, except for the "theologues" who were grouped together and whose vote was markedly different from the others. Generally, the students were strongly opposed, with a total of 81 against, 37 for, and 3 undecided. The divinity students were two to one in favor. The reporter noted that the canvassers met considerable resistance on the part of the students, many of whom "look[ed] upon the whole thing as a joke". Other students said young ladies should be admitted to the College after they were gone. They did not prefer to have, according to the reporter's words, "this destined affliction find them here when it comes." Tuftonian 12:3 (November 1885) The results of the alumni canvas was a contrast with the student poll. Not all alumni were reached, but of the 89 who responded, 29 were opposed, 9 were indifferent, and 51 in favor. Tuftonian 12:4 (December 1885) 60. Those who were in favor said so only with the stipulation that enough funds could be raised so that coeducation did not put an added strain on the College's present program. (Report on Opening the College to Women, by E.H. Capen, 1885.) The results of the faculty study were mixed: three in favor, six were in 'unqualified' opposition; one in 'qualified' opposition; and three would not object if women could be housed differently than in the present dormitory system (Ibid.)

13 Dissenting Report to Trustees Re: Admission of Women, Wilmot L. Warren, Springfield, December 7, 1885.

14 For a good overview of the debate on the pros and cons of women in higher education, see Woody, pp. 256-280.

15 E.L. Rexford. "College Doors," Christian Leader (July 4, 1889) 5.

16 Ibid.

17 Charles Robinson, "Tufts College and Dr. Rexford," Christian Leader (July 25, 1889) 5.

18 Miller, p. 298.

19 Ibid., p. 176.

20 Woody, pp. 305-307.

21 The will read: "In great thankfulness for the opportunity now opening before me, which realizes the dream of my youth and which has grown into a hope with advancing years, viz; that of helping to remove the disabilities of women, I give and bequeath to Tufts College...Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000) to be used and applied by the trustees of said college for the erection of a building to be designated



the Cornelia M. Jackson College for Women and to provide for the instruction of women in the duties and privileges of American Citizenship, and in the theory and working of the United States government in addition to the regular course prescribed by Tufts College for students to which women are admitted with men on the same terms, being eligible to the same degrees. It is on condition that a building be erected and thus designated and that provision be made for the special instruction indicated that this bequest is made." (Will of Cornelia Maria Jackson, February 1, 1893)

22 Miller, p. 182.

23 Ibid., p. 185.

24 Ibid., p. 187.

25 Tufts Weekly (February 22, 1899).

26 Trustees' Committee on Co-education, Report #5, March 14, 1899.

27 Miller, pp. 191, 194.

28 Ibid., p. 192.

29 For a discussion of segregated education, see Woody, pp. 280-295.

30 William Wallace Rose, "The Co-ed Hater," Tuftonian 35:2 (November, 1909) 19.

31 Tufts Weekly 4:9 (December 7, 1898) p. 2.

32 Ibid., 5:21 (March 28, 1900) 1.

33 The committee, made up of five members including the president, vice president, and the treasurer of the Corporation, gathered opinions of the senior faculty members, alumni, and students. Ibid., pp. 194-195.

34 Trustees' Committee Report, April 12, 1910.

35 Ibid., p. 3.

36 Ibid., p. 5.

37 Miller, pp. 192-193.

38 Trustees Committee Report.

39 An Act by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Authorizing the Trustees of Tufts College to Maintain a Separate College for Women, 1910, Sections 1-5.

- 40 Miller, p. 199.
- 41 Ibid, p. 191.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 203, 205.
- 43 Ibid., p. 207.
- 44 Mabel Newcomer, A Century of Higher Education for American Women (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959) p. 3.
- 45 Hosea Starr Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d, D.D. First President of Tufts College. His Origin, Life, and Letters (Boston: Guild, 1896) p. 291.
- 46 George Homer Emerson, The Life of Alonzo Ames Miner, S.T.D., L.L.D. (Boston: Universalist Pub. House 1896) p. 400-401.
- 47 Miller, p. 142.
- 48 Ibid., p. 189.
- 49 "Concerning Co-education," Tufts Weekly, 13:6 (October 31, 1907) 4.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 "No More Co-eds at Wesleyan," Tufts Weekly, 5:21 (March 28, 1900) 1; also, Trustees of Tufts College Committee on Coeducation Report, March 14, 1899, pp. 2-3.
- 52 Ordway Tead, Trustees, Teachers, Students. Their Role in Higher Education (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1951) p. 5-6.
- 53 Tufts Weekly 4:9 (December 7, 1898) 2
- 54 Gail Bambrick and Theresa Pease, "The Women of Tufts," Tufts Criterion, 17:2 (Winter, 1985) 15.

## CHAPTER III

## DENOMINATIONAL DYNAMICS VERSUS

## REGIONAL PRESSURES

In Chapter II we saw how the push toward coeducation finally won out after forty years. While economics were first presented as impediments to women's admission, ultimately women were admitted to all classes and departments on an equal basis, unlike most other colleges in New England. That coeducation marked the "unusualness" of Tufts among most of its neighboring institutions of higher learning did not find sympathy with its leader, President Hamilton, whose goal was to return the college to men. Given the support of higher education for women by the denomination, where were Universalists in light of Tufts' unique position? What part did the denomination play? What were the deeper issues that led the way toward segregation? To approach these questions, we first turn to the denomination and then to influences within New England.

## DENOMINATIONAL DYNAMICS

When we look beyond the apparent large percentage of Universalists engaged in advancing opportunities for women we meet a kind of double message. On the one hand, considering the smallness of the denomination, there was a large group of individuals, men as well as women, who championed women's rights and made higher education accessible

to women.<sup>1</sup> The more prominent women included Olympia Brown, Mary A. Livermore and Clara Barton. The Universalists unlike the Unitarians, made a point of recognizing the contributions of women and kept histories of leading lay and clergy which they compiled into biographical dictionaries.<sup>2</sup>

The most outspoken supporter of women was Sylvanus Cobb, an influential social reformer and main voice of Universalist liberalism.<sup>3</sup> Writing as editor in the most liberal denominational journal, The Christian Freeman, Cobb responded to the action taken by the 1854 Massachusetts Universalist Convention in tabling the resolution calling for the admission of women. "There is a growing wish...to extend and multiply the opportunities for women's usefulness and profitable employment. It is known that woman is 'apt to teach', if she possesses knowledge to communicate...We may find many strong minded women who, with the highest education, will be able to make their acquirements of great service to themselves and others." Stating that colleges in the West were open to women, he hoped Tufts will follow suit. He concluded by stating that "arbitrary and senseless custom" should not determine policy but rather an independent pursuit of what is right.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, while there were those on the forefront, Universalists in general were reluctant to get behind them in promoting women's rights, unlike the support shown for other reform movements such as anti-slavery and temperance. Perhaps typical of Universalists in support of the

progress of women, historian John G. Adams reveals an inconsistency toward women and higher education: "Woman's rights in law are now more plainly and justly defined, and the importance of her equal education with the other sex admitted and emphasized. She is prominent and indispensable as a teacher...she is a graduate of the college and a professor there; she is a successful practitioner in the legal and medical professions; she is an ordained minister of the Gospel..."<sup>5</sup> Yet Adams, despite these advanced sentiments, did not become a proponent of coeducation at Tufts. It was another ten years after Adams' writings that women were admitted.

The 1855 Massachusetts convention appears to be the last time during the beginning years of the college that the subject of coeducation was brought up on the state level. At no time was there any discussion on a national level about coeducation and Universalist institutions. Reluctant to organize themselves into centralized bodies, Universalists left decision-making to their local and state bodies.<sup>6</sup> Not until a new administrative order was ratified by a majority of state conventions in 1865 and the General Convention incorporated in 1866 was there a nationally recognized authority to guide the business of the denomination.<sup>7</sup> Thus while the sentiments may have been generally supportive toward women receiving higher education, there was no official national word on the matter, and the decision to become coeducational must have been entirely left to

each individual institution and/or the state convention where the institution was located.

Yet the 1855 Massachusetts State Convention did urge the founders of the College to consider coeducation. Did the resolution not have any weight whatsoever with the school? Why was it necessary for a concerned Universalist like Mrs. Bruce to raise the issue again almost twenty years later? Why would it be yet another twenty years before coeducation would be officially adopted?

By comparing Tufts with another Universalist school, Buchtel, in terms of origins and relationship to the denomination we see several major distinctions which may help explain why Tufts was different with respect to its resistance to coeducation.

Buchtel's origins were deeply rooted to local (Ohio) rather than regional needs (New England). The college in Ohio was born out of official convention business and its financial burden officially placed directly on those who wanted the school.<sup>8</sup> Without a commitment from the official body and without broad financial support, there would have been no school. The burden was on the Ohioans, but out of this sense of financial responsibility and commitment would come the loyalty and pride that sustained the institution as an on-going concern.

Buchtel, then, was under the direct supervision of the Ohio Convention and was required by its charter to make annual reports to it based on visitations by committees

appointed by the convention.<sup>9</sup> A further connection was through the financial agent of the state convention who raised funds for both Buchtel and the permanent missionary fund. This meant that a representative of the denomination outside the College was responsible, in part, at least, for fund-raising. Further help came from Universalists in the form of furnishings for the dormitory rooms,<sup>10</sup> which served to deepen the sense of connectedness to the school. Especially pertinent for the purposes of this study is the fact that the trustees were nominated by the Ohio Convention.<sup>11</sup> This meant that periodically new ideas and attitudes were introduced from outside sources which provided opportunity for innovation and change.

Tufts, on the other hand, while clearly identifiable with Universalists, was not under the direct control of any Universalist body, therefore not accountable to any group. In addition, the Tufts' Board of Trustees was a self-perpetuating governing body.<sup>12</sup>

Members among themselves nominated successors to the body and, if the Tufts' Board was typical of such groups, it would have tended to choose individuals of like minds and/or similar values. Members could, had they desired, remained in office indefinitely, being re-elected periodically until they retired or died. Further, members were not required to be affiliated with the denomination. As a consequence, those who were not Universalists had little or no connection with

the national or state groups and would not be in a position to speak for the denomination's goals and ideals.

Further, although the school was supported financially through appeals by Universalist churches and individuals and through the denominational press, there was no official body, i.e., state or national convention or association that provided sponsorship, legal responsibility,<sup>13</sup> or new input.

In sum, while Tufts was perceived as the light of Universalism in the East,<sup>14</sup> it was not representative of the whole denomination. In the West, by 1870 the state universities began expanding into large institutions and the admission of women in the state system was expected. The university system was seen as an extension of the coeducational public school systems.<sup>15</sup> Further, using the same facilities to educate both sexes was both economic and efficient,<sup>16</sup> and the idea of justice toward women in the West where women shared in the daily work and responsibilities on the frontier demanded that they be included.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, a freer, more progressive attitude was encouraged in the West toward coeducation which influenced the acceptance of coeducation in privately-supported schools. We can see this readiness toward admission of women on an equal basis at Universalist schools in the West by examining the records.

From the day of opening, St. Lawrence University and Lombard, Buchtel, and Smithson Colleges, were coeducational. In the case of Buchtel, which opened in 1872, in Akron,



Ohio, coeducation was written right into its purpose: The school was to be of "the highest order" and provide education "on equal terms, of both sexes, and for the preparation of teachers for our Common Schools."<sup>18</sup> In the case of Smithson, which opened January, 1872 at Logansport, Indiana, the circular read: "Believing that the happiness of the sexes requires them to live together in the companionship of equals, this college opens its doors to them on the same terms." Further, "individual merit and attainment, not sex, will determine student rank." Smithson also democratized faculty/administration relationships by paying and ranking the "lady principal"--who was also a member of the faculty--the same as any other faculty member.<sup>19</sup>

These colleges meant what they said, for they built for coeducation. Buchtel, for example, when opened consisted of one large building planned to accommodate all educational purposes, and included space for housing 150 students--men on one side and women on the other.<sup>20</sup> A similar situation existed at St. Lawrence<sup>21</sup> and Smithson.<sup>22</sup>

Lombard College, originally called the Illinois Liberal Institute, was described as "well manned and womaned" (sic). It opened in 1853 with 134 students: 39 in the collegiate division (25 men and 14 women), and 95 (59 men and 36 women) in the preparatory and vocational departments.<sup>23</sup> Thus women were admitted to all of its departments on an equal footing with men, attended the same classes and eligible for the same diplomas, degrees, and honors. Even in extracurricular

activities, what may have been off-limits for women in other institutions, e.g., literary clubs and social organizations, were open to women at Lombard.<sup>24</sup>

In 1856, two years after Tufts opened, the first graduation for the Bachelor of Arts degrees took place at Lombard. Two of the six graduates were women.<sup>25</sup> Lombard was the first Universalist-sponsored college--and the second college in the United States--to award the Bachelor of Arts degree to women.<sup>26</sup>

By 1866 two of the seven faculty were women.<sup>27</sup> The subject of women's rights was frequently given attention in lectures and official exercises. During commencement weekend of 1868, President Weston advocated for equality of the sexes in his baccalaureate address, and Augusta Jane Chapin, the second woman ordained in the Universalist ministry, spoke on the liberal education of women.<sup>28</sup> This was taking place even before Tufts considered the issue of coeducation.

It is reasonable to speculate at this point why it was that Tufts was deaf to the advances made by the schools in the West, why it chose not to be influenced by them. The reason is straightforward. When we look beyond their bold precedents, we see that the schools were not on solid financial footing. Each had its problems. Lombard had an inadequate endowment and even more inadequate enrollment, which, after 1873 continued on a downward slope;<sup>29</sup> Buchtel had financial problems which grew increasingly severe as time

went on;<sup>30</sup> St. Lawrence had to open as a preparatory school as it did not have any applicants for its collegiate program its first year;<sup>31</sup> Smithson had its bright hopes dashed six years after opening when it had no alternative but to close midst drastic indebtedness.<sup>32</sup>

We learned earlier how Tufts leadership had always expressed grave concern about its finances. These examples of struggling Universalist colleges in the West would hardly offer inspiration for Tufts' trustees eager to ground the College solidly in the New England community, anxious to garner for it recognition and acclaim. While other Universalist institutions were among those in the lead in trends showing women student enrollment on the rise--by 1870 almost one-third of the nation's colleges, excluding technical and women's schools, had admitted women, and of the 97 colleges surveyed, 67 were in the western states.<sup>33</sup> Tufts nevertheless quietly averted its eyes from the West and kept its gaze steadily upon New England. Other forces would influence the schools' decision-makers and shape its character and vision. To appreciate what they were, we look to Tufts' place in the environment of New England at that time.

#### REGIONAL PRESSURES

Importantly, there is a relationship between town and gown. Nineteenth century educational institutions were perceived as community institutions.<sup>34</sup> They saw themselves of a particular community, educating for that community. In

the case of Tufts, the school would provide leaders for the New England community of which it perceived itself not only an integral part, but in a leadership capacity. As President Ballou indicated in his inaugural address, the purpose of Tufts was to enlighten and shape the community. Standing in its privileged position at the pinnacle of institutions that advance civilization, the College was obliged to return that privilege to its community by providing the best education for the creation of new minds to lead the community forward.<sup>35</sup>

Officially, Tufts was connected with New England institutions through its charter affiliation with the Association of Colleges in New England, organized in 1858 and operated for many years as the Association of Southern New England Colleges. Its purpose was to consider the various matters of common interest of the member schools. Throughout its history, Tufts never separated itself very far from commonly held policy and attitudes.<sup>36</sup> The one time it did so, when it chose to go fully coeducational, it later found itself too unique for its clientele. A return to the fold--to the common pattern of coordinate education was seen as necessary.

Tufts, therefore, identified with New England, and this identification was a major determining factor as it plotted its course through its development as a growing institution. That its regional character was strong is reflected in its enrollment in terms of origin and sex. In the first school

directory compiled in 1865, of the 224 students connected with the College since its opening, only 59 came from outside New England.<sup>37</sup> As we have seen, all students were male, in keeping with most of the other well established New England institutions of the time.

Perhaps representative of New England Universalist thinking was historian John G. Adams, who saw no reason why Tufts needed to take the lead in coeducation nor did any Massachusetts or Universalist school, and the fact that the college was like all the other colleges in this regard was one of its strong points.<sup>38</sup> The desire to remain like other New England schools on this issue, rather than identifying with other Universalist institutions and denominational impulses appeared early on and was deeply felt.

In terms of its choice of curriculum, Tufts was also regional in its orientation. It looked to the principal schools of New England, specifically, Harvard, Williams, and Yale to learn what was being taught, how the chapel services were conducted, what the salaries were, how the colleges were governed, so as to combine the best in instruction and administration for the new college.<sup>39</sup> Like other New England schools, it offered a classical curriculum of four years leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.<sup>40</sup>

Further, the first four presidents of Tufts were members of the clergy, typical of the New England pattern which looked to the ministry for leadership of the institution which best represented the highest social and intellectual

effort of the community.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the entire structure of the institution through its official affiliation with other New England schools, its ministerial leadership, classical curriculum, and regional male enrollment was New England in every way. Finally, to be located in New England and aligned with its social structures is to be deeply connected to history and tradition in a manner unknown elsewhere in the country. In terms of Universalists, it meant breathing the air of one's heritage, for they had in their very midst, descendants of the early leaders of the faith. In terms of Tufts, it meant that behind the doors of the trustees' meetings were those very descendants and their peers, defining the College, directing its business, and shaping its future. When Adams wrote of indebtedness to "the fathers of Universalism in our land,"<sup>42</sup> he wrote as a New Englander keenly aware of the presence of these men around him.

In contrast, Universalists in the West did not have the presence of denominational leadership in their experience and were freer to work out educational needs in the context of the community at large forming itself. Frontier people were creating their own structures without deferring to the past. Lydia A. Jenkins, writing from New York was, it would seem, better able to see the constrictions placed upon Tufts by its tradition-bound leaders. T.J. Sawyer, while a New England minister and highly esteemed leader along with Ballou 2d in education, could actively promote coeducation

as president of Clinton Liberal Institute, a secondary school in New York. In response to Whittemore's disparaging comments about the school, Sawyer wrote "Shall we provide no school for our young women? Must we expend \$100,000 for the education of our sons, and never once think of the education of our daughters?"<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, this defender of women seeking higher education became the first faculty member of the newly created divinity school at Tufts in 1869,<sup>44</sup> twenty three years before it was to become co-educational. From the records we have no evidence that Sawyer advocated coeducation later while teaching at Tufts. Again, the values of tradition--honoring the male-only status of Tufts origins--would appear to have won out over innovation.

As the background continues to come into focus in the struggle of coeducation at Tufts, the goals and ideals of the denomination diminish while the ever-persistent and pervasive influence of New England becomes more significant. When we picture the humble origins of the founders of the College, eager to advance the cause of Universalism by moving upward into the social structure, we can appreciate their desire for success, their willingness to honor those values that supported the hierarchy in the New England community where power lay with the educated and the educated were men. As Tufts was the first Universalist institution of higher learning perceived as a college from its beginning, and as Tufts was the first college to be given birth by the come-outer religion, Universalism, the College was

quite eager to embrace and protect the social structure to which it was attempting to gain greater access.

The desire for esteem is a need all people share.<sup>45</sup> This is no less true of institutions. Tufts' first social business as a fledgling institution founded by unlearned men was to create a climate of esteem for itself to help ensure its survival. We should not be surprised that the school would generally conform to what was happening elsewhere in New England among institutions of high learning and groups attracting the esteemed.

Probably the most prestigious religious group in New England at this time was Unitarianism, and Harvard was perceived as its institution. Most of its presidents and faculty were Unitarians and its curriculum in general reflected the philosophy of the movement.<sup>46</sup> Further, the Board of Overseers, a large governing body consisting of the Governor, the Council, the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and thirty others was dominated by Unitarians as was the Harvard Corporation, an executive committee responsible for the running of the institution.<sup>47</sup>

Hosea Ballou 2d, self taught scholar and Universalist, was elected to the prestigious Board of Overseers in 1843. His participation in this esteemed circle would continue for fifteen years. Ballou probably began his association with Harvard when he began doing research for his work, Ancient History of Universalism in the Harvard library. Counted among his friends was Josiah Quincy, president of the



college from 1829-1846. Ballou resigned in 1858 only because his work at Tufts as president did not allow time for any other major office. Ballou received further acclaim from Harvard; in 1844 he was awarded the honorary Master of Arts degree and in 1845 the Doctor of Sacred Theology. In so doing, he won recognition for himself as a self-educated man and for the denomination<sup>48</sup> heretofore not seriously regarded by Harvard men because Universalist preachers were plain of speech and often lacking in formal training.

A few years later, other Universalists associated with Tufts received honorary degrees from Harvard: Otis A. Skinner, an early trustee, and Benjamin Franklin Tweed, a member of the original faculty,<sup>49</sup> and A.A. Miner, trustee and second president. Minor was also elected to the Harvard Board of Overseers.<sup>50</sup>

What has the honoring of Tufts' men by Harvard got to do with the resistance to coeducation at Tufts? We recognize that we are in the realm of speculation, but there appear to be several connections.

Esteemed individuals join up with other esteemed persons in the social structure. The more prominent the source of the esteem, i.e., family or achievement, the greater the possibility for moving higher up among the more highly esteemed.<sup>51</sup> Ballou's name was prominent among Boston educational circles, and he was respected among prominent Harvard men. It was logical, therefore, that he would be elected to Harvard's Board of Overseers. The awarding of honors upon

him and other Tufts' men deepened the linkage with Harvard and created within the Tufts and Universalist communities a dimension of prestige previously unknown.

If we are correct in our understanding of Unitarian and Universalist dynamics--that the Unitarians had, in terms of social rank what the Universalists were striving for--Universalists would be particularly receptive to accepting the prestige given by Harvard, and particularly encouraged to make their college the most respected in its class. They knew they could never compete with Harvard, but they could attempt to make Tufts the best school in the denomination. Further, Harvard, in welcoming Tufts men into prestigious Boston circles, elevated the students, the school, and the denomination as well.

Earlier we saw how the founders perceived Tufts only in male terms, that what can be identified as a gender ideology was dominant. One feature of gender ideologies is that concepts used to separate men from women are often synonymous with the concepts used to differentiate other values and social types, even those concepts that we use to rank individuals of the same gender.<sup>52</sup> The polarities of Harvard, high culture, male-only, come together here, inviting Tufts men to think of their male only school as high culture Universalist in comparison with the "lesser" Universalist schools in the untamed, uncultured West that admitted women. Tufts men, in being so honored by Harvard would be encouraged to create another male domain of

intellectual activity, theirs for the Universalists. Inviting women in would break the pattern of prestige that legitimized and honored male supremacy. The upholding of male supremacy--we hasten to add--was vital to a struggling, young college in tradition-bound New England of the mid-nineteenth century. Tufts, in seeking esteem, could not in its early years, at least, admit women and pursue the course it set out to achieve. If Tufts had admitted women, it would have had to give up its goals that were aligned with New England notions of prestige and would have had to redefine the school's purposes. A gender system is, more than anything else, a prestige system,<sup>53</sup> and prestige is what Tufts' founders sought--to advance both the school and Universalism.

Tufts' founders, then, in seeking to be the intellectual "creme" of Universalism, were unsympathetic or resistant to ideas that would threaten that goal. This explains the distance between the founders and their critics that proposed higher education for women. The founders never comment in writing on why women were unacceptable. They simply remain silent. Because they have positions of high status in the Universalist community backed by Harvard approval, they are able to function powerfully in silence. The silence appears to function on two levels--to conform to Harvard and Unitarian ideals--and to absorb the controversy in response to the founders' deviations from what Universalists had expected of them.

There is silence also on the part of members of the community. It goes without saying that it would have been difficult for the average New England Universalist to criticize a journalist as outspoken as a Whittemore, owner and editor of the popular and reliable Trumpet, or a minister challenge the nephew of the father of the faith. The founder's deviation of not going along with the Massachusetts Universalist convention wishes regarding coeducation at Tufts would go unchallenged by what could be termed as a hidden agenda of silence in deference to the men of rank.

The question of deference appears to play a major role in keeping a prestige system functioning. We can appreciate this more fully by examining the kind of attention and deference paid to what went on at Harvard in response to the controversy over women receiving higher education. By the 1870's, the issue was widely discussed throughout the nation.<sup>54</sup> All educators had to come to terms with these demands and prejudices in some manner or other. One early response was to attempt to argue that women were physically unfit for intellectual pursuits. Although this notion was disproven, prejudice against women receiving a college education was aired in the press and given a new dressing. While recognizing that women could, indeed, do the work, Dr. Edward H. Clarke, physician and Harvard professor in medicine, theorized that the mental strain of academic pursuits would ultimately result in adverse physical effects on women's health, specifically on their reproductive systems.

Using seven examples from his medical practice, he maintained he had seen instances of "females in whom the (reproductive) mechanism...remained germinal--undeveloped. It seemed to have been aborted. They graduated from...college excellent scholars, but with undeveloped ovaries. Later they married and were sterile."<sup>55</sup> Recommending that mothers and educators read Leviticus, Clarke put forth the notion of segregation of the sexes as "the race has not yet quite outgrown the physiology of Moses...Girls lose health, strength, blood, and nerve by a regime that ignores the periodical tides and reproductive apparatus of the organization."<sup>56</sup> Young women must study in an appropriate manner that they will not inhibit the development of their reproductive systems, i.e., studying in class four hours a day rather than the customary six, plus time off during menstruation. Unless they scale down the intensity of the work, their health will suffer, the college will produce half-girls of boys and half-boys of girls<sup>57</sup> and future generations of Americans will become a weak race. Men will have to seek wives from across the seas. "The sons of the New World will have to re-act, on a magnificent scale, the old story of unwived Rome and the Sabines."<sup>58</sup> Therefore, coeducation is "a crime before God and humanity."<sup>59</sup> What was required was a rearrangement of instruction to allow for "special and appropriate education for women. This can not be accomplished without a great deal of expenditure."<sup>60</sup>

Clarke was not out on a limb; he had the substantial backing and possible encouragement of President Charles Eliot of Harvard. Perhaps the most esteemed man in American higher education in the nineteenth century, Eliot, a Unitarian, played a major role in shaping university standings and academic life. In a revealing essay written in 1908 on higher education for women, Eliot stated that as women have proven they can do the work, women's colleges can now go on to provide an education for women "adapted to the special needs of women." He clearly not only preferred segregated education but special, "appropriate" education for women.<sup>61</sup>

About the beginnings of education for women at Harvard, he admitted to having doubts, doubts that clustered around women's intellectual capacity, a perceived fear for their health, and fear of a potential loss of their womanly nature<sup>62</sup>--all of which Clarke elaborated upon.

In Eliot's Inaugural Address in 1869, he stated that women will not be received into Harvard as it would pose too many disciplinary problems in terms of residence. Denying that the Corporation was not influenced by "crude notions about women's mental capacities," he went on to say "the University does not undertake to protect the community against incompetent lawyers, ministers, or doctors. The community must protect itself by refusing to employ such. Practical, not theoretical, considerations determine the policy of the University."<sup>63</sup> He then went on to define a

practical, experimental course for women wherein Harvard would offer studies in "liberal culture...which would have no direct professional value but which would enrich and enlarge both intellect and character. In this manner, Harvard hope[d]...to contribute to the intellectual emancipation of women."<sup>64</sup>

The Tufts Collegian, a student publication, in supplying coverage on the question of coeducation, gave attention to a review of Clarke's work. Clarke's lack of solid statistics and his coarseness of language were noted and then toned down by a suggestion of deference: "... the high character of the writer justly demands for the treatise a respectful attention." A subsequent issue addressed his critics' positions, among them that of Julia Ward Howe, and deferred judgment until more information was made available.<sup>65</sup> Leaders in higher education elsewhere advocating coeducation, e.g., Andrew D. White, president of Cornell, and James B. Angell of the University of Michigan, were not given coverage at this time.

The student writer supported Clarke's critics in their criticisms of Clarke's negligence in providing any considerable amount of supportive evidence, and in supplying cases that did not apply to the consequences of coeducation. Yet there appears a reluctance to reject Clarke's position. The plea for more information seems to be a technique in backing off from taking a stand. Why the deference midst such blatant assertions? Why the almost

full-page attention given to Clarke in the first place? Allowing for the fact that the issue of women's ability to cope with intellectual demands was controversial, this still does not explain why Dr. Clarke's "high character" is used to defend attention given his position. What has character to do with the logic of his argument?

We propose that what is going on here is what Goode refers to as the "flow of prestige through reputation and membership".<sup>66</sup> Because human beings perceive one another as members of social units, our initial behavior and attitudes toward individuals coincide with how we perceive their affiliations.<sup>67</sup> If we respect them, as we do an institution such as Harvard, especially Harvard in terms of higher education, then we tend to attribute the same degree of esteem to those associated with the institution. In this case, Clarke would embody as much prestige as Harvard--until Clarke is shown undeserving of it.

It is reasonable to assume that such a provocative monograph as Clarke's would have been read by most of the staff at Tufts. Contemporaneously with Clarke's work was the decision of the Massachusetts State Convention to reject Mrs. E.H. Bruce's resolutions pushing for coeducation at Tufts. It is interesting to note that President Miner, in his lengthy speech against the resolutions,<sup>68</sup> used language similar to Clarke: "While women should have every advantage, does it follow that she must recite in the same room with men? ...A man is not a woman and a woman not a man;



and if education attempts to make either the other, it will fail."<sup>69</sup> Miner, in appropriating Clarke's arguments and applying them to Tufts attempted to align Tufts with the prestige system represented by Clarke, and in the alignment with the most prestigious male-only institution in the country, Miner advocates the male-only status at Tufts. It was symbolically consistent that Miner reinforce Clarke.

As outrageous as Clarke's monograph reads today, his theory received wide attention. The book reached eleven editions in six years.<sup>70</sup> Two hundred copies were sold in one day at the University of Michigan,<sup>71</sup> indicative of the level of agitation it caused its female readers. While physicians attacked it, many individuals read it and quoted it.<sup>72</sup>

The widespread notion in the culture around which Clarke built his argument was the doctrine of separate spheres.<sup>73</sup> Each sex was to keep its place to maintain its inherent qualities. Biological differences were determinant. It is not a question of one sex being superior to the other, but of being different. If there was crossing over of the one into the other's realm, i.e., women entering male perceived pursuits such as higher education, there would not only be individual harm but genetic repercussions as well. The evolutionary process demanded that they remain separate.

Separation was most effectively achieved through complementarity. Each sex was strengthened and enhanced by carrying out its prescribed work. Thus its uniqueness would

be maintained. Feminine uniqueness was so deeply embedded in American thinking that not even feminists challenged it. Liberation lay in defending woman's right to enlarge her sphere.<sup>74</sup> She could expand her nurturing and helping nature by mothering the world by engaging in voluntary efforts, reform movements, and by teaching. This she could do without harming her nature and threatening the future of the race, for she could attend a woman's college and not have to exert herself as rigorously as she would in academe.

It took another twenty years before coeducation was adopted at Tufts. The separate spheres theory supported by dominant male prestige structures became a kind of belief system for many, expressed by individuals as disparate as President Eliot, Trustee Robinson, and Catherine Beecher.<sup>75</sup> Both theory and structures were accepted as ideology legitimating behavior and attitudes. Howe and other critics of Clarke could only counter with cases of successful women students who experienced excellent health, for the effects of academic work on women were still unknown.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, there were Universalists who spoke out. Many, like Rev. Rexford did not accept the notion that women had to be separated, that male nature would lose its masculinity if men were educated alongside women. Many students were also not inhibited by separatist notions.

It would appear, therefore, that the denomination had some impact. First of all, when the school chose to move,

it adopted coeducation rather than the coordinate plan. It is unlikely that the College would have moved in so complete a direction had there been no other coeducational colleges supported by the denomination. Second, the student's general tolerance of coeducation also may have reflected the Universalist ideal of an equal chance for all. When that was lacking in schools in the East, such as at Wesleyan where the men demonstrated against coeducation and had the women removed, and at Harvard where women had to attend classes outside in the "Annex" the students and others were critical. Conceivably this was one area Tufts could do Harvard--and Unitarianism--one better. Or, perhaps, it simply was a matter of attempting to conform at long last to the wishes of the denomination and to the schools in the West, which, despite their economic failures, were witness to Universalist egalitarianism in a manner Tufts was not.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Russell E. Miller, The Larger Hope: The First Century of the Universalist Church in America, 1770-1870 (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1979) p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> See Hanaford, Hanson, Hersey, and Hitchings.

<sup>3</sup> Miller, p. 302.

<sup>4</sup> Sylvanius Cobb, Christian Freeman, 16 (July 14, 1854) 42.

<sup>5</sup> John Greenlead Adams, Fifty Notable Years. Views of the Ministry of Christian Universalism During the Last Half-Century (Boston: Universalist Pub. House, 1882) pp. 76-77.

<sup>6</sup> John Henry Allen and Richard Eddy. A History of Unitarians and Universalists in the United States New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894) pp. 463-464; also Miller, pp. 60-61.

<sup>7</sup> Allen and Eddy, p. 468.

<sup>8</sup> Miller, p. 471.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 477.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 474.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 477.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from Russell E. Miller to Vincent, January 11, 1985.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "Report of the Committee on Education", Universalist Centennial (1870) 15.

<sup>15</sup> Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History, (New York: Knopf, 1962) p. 314.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States, II (New York: Science Press, 1929) p. 256.

<sup>17</sup> Rudolph.

<sup>18</sup> Miller, p. 474.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 482.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 474.

- 21 Ibid., p. 461.
- 22 Ibid., p. 482.
- 23 Ibid., p. 465.
- 24 Ibid., p. 470.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Miller, p. 463.
- 27 Ibid., p. 465, quoted in the Universalist Register  
(1967) 67-68.
- 28 Ibid., p. 470.
- 29 Ibid., p. 468.
- 30 Ibid., p. 477-478.
- 31 Ibid., p. 460-461
- 32 Ibid., p. 483.
- 33 Woody, p. 252.
- 34 Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education. The National Experience: 1783-1876 (New York: Harper Row, 1980) p. 486.
- 35 Hosea Ballou, 2d. "Inaugural Address at the Opening of Tufts College." August 22, 1855. University Quarterly 12 (October, 1855) 331-332.
- 36 Russell E. Miller, Light on the Hill: A History of Tufts College 1852-1952 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) pp. 377-378.
- 37 Ibid., p. 350.
- 38 Christian Freeman 16 (August 4, 1854) 53.
- 39 Records, Minutes of Board of Trustees, July 12, 1853, p. 46.
- 40 Miller, p. 46.
- 41 George Paul Schmidt, The Old Time College President (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930) p. 50.
- 42 Adams, p. 44.
- 43 T.A. Sawyer, "Clinton Liberal Institute," Trumpet 31 (August 11, 1849) 34.

- 44 Miller, Larger Hope p. 426.
- 45 William J. Goode, The Celebration of Heroes: Prestige as a Social Control System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) p. vii.
- 46 Sydney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972) p. 398.
- 47 Miller, Light, p. 35.
- 48 Ibid., p. 36.
- 49 Ibid., p. 35-36.
- 50 Ibid., p. 104.
- 51 Goode, p. 66-72.
- 52 Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (eds.) Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 16-17.
- 53 Ibid.
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- 55 Edward H. Clarke, Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for the Girls (Boston: Osgood, 1874) p. 39.
- 56 Ibid., pp. 126-127.
- 57 Ibid., p. 150.
- 58 Ibid., p. 63.
- 59 Ibid., p. 27.
- 60 Ibid., p. 149.
- 61 William Allan Neilson, Charles W. Eliot: The Man and His Beliefs (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926) p. 161.
- 62 Ibid., pp. 160-163.
- 63 Ibid., p. 22.
- 64 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
- 65 Dr. Clarke's Critics, Tufts Collegian 1:4 (December 1874) 38.
- 66 Goode, p. 101.

67 Ibid.

68 The issue of admission of women at Tufts aired at the Convention was covered by Tufts Collegian, providing extensive coverage on Miner's remarks. See "Shall Women Be Admitted to Tufts?" Tufts Collegian 1:3 (November 1874) 29. This is the same issue that reviews Clarke. pp. 24-25.

69 Miller, p. 168.

70 Woody, p. 274.

71 Rosalind Rosenberg, Beyond Separate Spheres: Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) p. 12.

72 Woody.

73 Rosenberg, p. 1-27.

74 Rosenberg, p. 14.

75 Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

76 Rosenberg, p. 17.

## CONCLUSION

The origins of any institution should provide ample study of the workings of prestige. The trustees governing the institution make up a social structure that is dependent upon approval by the larger group and the larger group invests into the trustees its respect and esteem. In our simple interactions with one another, our perceptions and judgment of an individual are colored by his/her social connections--be they class, neighborhood, town, ethnic group, or religious body. We perceive others first as members of a social body, and attribute to them the respect we attribute to their group. So, too, with the trustees of an institution.

We have seen in this study how the founders of Tufts were key agents in gaining approval, giving it, and therefore, aligning Tufts with prestige structures in the New England community. The founders brought to their position as trustees the success and esteem they earned as leaders in the secular worlds of business, education, and journalism. They had access to virtually every significant segment of the community: in the world where money matters--in dealings in land and commerce--in the areas of public and denominational education, and in the sphere of communication and the power of the printed word. They moved in these worlds with skill and influence. A Packard, a Ballou, and a Whittemore carried with them a host of positive symbols and associations. Their self-made status in addition to their



prominence--helped Universalists form an impression of the College that engendered support. As their decisions in creating a male-only college for Universalists affirmed patterns of New England societal life, the trustees gained more approval and increased the potential for Tufts' survival and success.

The trustees of Tufts, then, were qualified to connect with key representatives of power and prestige structures in the community because they themselves possessed power. Whenever they were affirmed--as in Miner's case, achieving the requested funds that got the College out of debt--so was the College. Whenever they were honored, so was the College. As was typical of the times, the town of Medford saw itself enhanced by the presence of a college in its midst, and Tufts' growing esteem enhanced the powers that be in the community and in the environment beyond.

Another important prestige structure existed within the denomination itself, and the founders of Tufts contributed in considerable measure to its power base. As men known for articulating the meaning and purpose of Universalist theology and church life, they were held in high regard. That one of these men had the same name as one of the fathers of the faith added to the prestige of the Board. As prestige increases with increased power in achievement in name, so Tufts' prestige was enhanced by its association with Hosea Ballou 2d.

Men of the stature of a Ballou within a struggling institution supported by a young movement are often given considerable freedom to shape the institution as they see fit. Freedom allows for deviation and in the case of Tufts, the authority given the founders by members of the denomination enabled the College to become a Universalist exception in respect to the admission of women. Others may have attempted to define the institution in broader terms to be an embodiment of liberal inclusive faith, in fact, a majority may have seen the institution in such terms. Yet a majority of New England Universalists could barely be heard above the voices of the founders of Tufts singing a separatist song in unison with New England educators.

In addition to the resources in the community and in the denomination that reinforced the esteem needs of the builders of the institution, another dynamic--that of competition--came into play. In all social structuring, there is conscious and unconscious competition with the established leader. While Tufts could never consciously compete with the power, wealth, and prestige of Harvard, it attempted to emulate the older school by adopting similar standards and not deviating too far from what was deemed acceptable. Had Harvard been coeducational in 1850, there would have been no question about the admission of women to Tufts. Harvard set the pattern for Eastern schools, and Tufts respectfully followed that pattern. Once Harvard admitted Tufts' men into its inner circle through its honors

and awards system, there was not only enhanced prestige for Tufts, but also the fearful potential for exclusion and ridicule from "superiors" if Tufts did not conform to code or proved itself unworthy of Harvard honors.

Thus the task of Tufts' first trustees was considerable. To the larger community, they represented those come-outer church-goers who were one generation away from being outcasts for their heresy. They also emerged from the lower classes and the uneducated. The Tufts' trustees, then, had the added responsibility of being more than acceptable to the community. They had to prove that they were founding a college that would not promote heresy or be a problem for the community. The school needed to be accepted and respected in ways their forefathers were not. It needed to be in step with other institutions within proximity. It needed to uphold the supporting hierarchy of the community, in fact, feed that hierarchy with new leadership. The intellectual head of Universalism not only had to prove itself intellectually, but also in terms of being a reinforcing agent for the societal structure that so determined New England life. As that structure was male, Tufts' business was to educate male Universalists. Given the vision of its founders, the College could hardly be anything but a male-only institution. Unlike the coeducational institutions in the expanding West where a frontier environment distributed power and esteem more freely to women, Tufts was located in a culture where history and tradition were more

highly defined and valued, and that history and tradition was male.

An institution, like an individual, is constantly being shaped by the wish to gain the respect of others.<sup>1</sup> Without respect it cannot garner the human resources necessary for its support and survival. That Tufts sought approval from the New England community, that its trustees sought approval for their school also to help counter the anti-educational strand in the origins of Universalism was to be expected. As second generation Universalists sought to advance the faith, they had to command more approval than they had previously if the denomination was to hold its own among the orthodox, not to mention grow. The orthodox were educating their own; the Unitarians had Harvard; Universalists needed a light of which they could be proud.

A great deal was at stake here. Universalism, if it was to be taken seriously, had to have an intellectual center, and that center, supported by leaders in the denomination, had to succeed. In comparison with Universalist schools in the West, the situation for Tufts and Universalism was more critical, not only because the more traditional prestige structures determined the survival of the institution, but because within the institution there were prestige structures that were perceived to be critical to the denomination. In other words, if Tufts failed, what would that say for Universalism? Schools in the West did not have the weight of the denomination upon their shoulders to the same

degree as Tufts. Further, the schools in the West did not have Harvard as their neighbor, epitomizing all that an institution of higher learning should be. The pressure of Harvard's presence would be felt by all schools in the East, but with Tufts there was the added complication of past competition between Universalists and Unitarians, the Universalists being proud of their forthrightness in declaring their theology at considerable cost and challenging the Unitarians to do the same. While Universalists remained proud of their past, those times were over and the age demanded a new response: education. Like it or not, Harvard provided the most outstanding model and, when that model bestowed honors upon the leaders of Tufts, an added opportunity--to succeed--and an added burden--if it did not--presented themselves.

Tufts, then, became more than an institution; it became a particular symbol in a particular time and place for Universalism. Tufts symbolized in its beginnings what Universalists had never had before: acceptance in the religious community and opportunity for achievement in the social spheres of middle class New England. What was at stake, therefore, was not just Universalist heritage, but also the New England Universalist investment in its hopes and dreams for the future.

It would take a movement of considerable proportion, such as the national effort that opened doors of higher education to women, to counter the weight of Harvard's

example. That Tufts countered Harvard so completely and forthrightly when it adopted coeducation is remarkable. While no definitive answer can be given as the evidence is incomplete, we can speculate about how this might have happened. By the end of the nineteenth century, as arguments for coeducation won out nation-wide and Tufts found itself in a diminishing circle of male-only institutions, the College aligned itself with the other denominational institutions of higher learning. A second factor might have been Tufts desire to put itself forward in terms of coeducation in regard to most other schools in New England, especially Harvard. We know that Universalists were critical of Harvard's "Annex" which kept women outside Harvard's portals. Perhaps like the early Universalists speaking out against orthodoxy, Tufts' move in adopting coeducation put the College over against the orthodox patterns of New England higher education epitomized by Harvard. Perhaps the College perceived itself above Harvard in this respect. Coeducation at Tufts was, after all, adopted a year before the "Annex" was named Radcliffe and given the dignity of a coordinate college. Tufts, in putting into action the religious principles of the denomination, could perceive itself as doing what the Unitarians at Harvard chose not to do. Tufts would be known by its willingness to open its doors to all qualified students, thereby manifesting its higher ideals, while Harvard would remain behind the closed doors of the established order.

When Tufts male-only identity was threatened, the problem became one of compromise. Pressures from the denomination by 1910 would not have tolerated a return to the good old days when only men attended. The identity of Tufts, as we have seen earlier, would have had to undergo considerable transformation to have become a women's school. This step would have been too much to expect of a middle class school (often identified as a poor boy's college) and representative of a denomination still young. The only available solution was to allocate portions of prestige to women and portions to men in a coordinate system where men competed with men for honors and women competed with women. This avoided the unacceptable situation of women continuing to subvert the prestige formerly given outstanding men when extraordinary women were given awards and honors. The coordinate system, therefore, kept the basic New England prestige structure intact: males could compete with men while women could achieve awards in their own right. The sexes would remain in their separate spheres, and the uniqueness of men and women's psychology would be preserved while each complimented the other. The natural order would be maintained.

There are several theological implications drawn from this study. First, as messengers of the Good News that everyone is accepted unconditionally in the eyes of God, we, as equal children of God, need to own our part in encouraging and perpetuating destructive societal patterns that

segregate or exclude individuals by creed, race, color, or sex. The sin of pride runs through us all. It did not get cleared out of the dark recesses of our souls by the cool winds of the Enlightenment. Sin is still very much a part of the human condition, and liberating oneself and one's group from a particular set of restrictions does not mean the group is free from other forms of human bondage. The fathers of Universalism, while throwing off the shackles that bound by creed, were still bound by the assumptions and attitudes of prestige structures that excluded women, structures by which the fathers stood to gain even though they were outcasts in the community. As men they were part of the dominant hierarchy that placed women in the down under social order. The founders of Tufts, in attempting to build an institution on the ideals and principles articulated by the fathers, would therefore be limited by their cultural assumptions and complicity with the male-dominated social order. Their Universalist message was limited to members of their own sex. They did not carry their Universalism far enough. Their need for esteem drew a boundary around their theology.

One way that the boundary was tightened was through the use of deference. Deferring to key individuals played a role in keeping things from happening at Tufts. When a group accepts gratis the services of one of its members, what really is the price paid? How much does something like the legal services rendered the College and individual trus-



tees cost a cause like coeducation when such advise is given freely by a trustee opposing the cause? How are we inhibited by our dependence upon and deference to the leader who gets the institution out of debt and endows it as well? How much unconscious approval is given to his position on other matters? What is our part in condoning future actions that are based upon the receipt of past favors?

Deference, then, blocks change. None of the voices in this study that pushed for women's admission at Tufts deferred to those representing the power structure. They all identified with denominational ideals greater than the reality present at Tufts. The response to the denomination's higher goals demanded a break from the old ways of the founder's vision of a male-only institution, from the Harvard ideal, from the exclusivity of male leadership in New England society.

A second theological implication concerns an awareness of the need for esteem in self development--that while we cannot ignore its presence, we can critique where we are in our esteem needs in light of the Christian message.

As participants in an ever-expanding religious community, we need to ask ourselves where we are in the prestige structures in our lives. Does our need for esteem interfere with mutuality in our relationships? Giving and taking, taking and giving is the rhythm of a healing, empowering love<sup>2</sup> in which we are all invited to participate. Does our need for esteem constrict that flow of interchange? Are we

pushing ourselves into positions of prominence at the expense of others? When we give esteem to others, is our point to praise and affirm, or to set apart in an exclusive way what is destructive of community? Do we defer to those in positions of power to keep something going that benefits us or our group only? We like to admire others. On what basis do we admire them? When do we allocate our esteem? As we own our part in keeping things as they are when others are inhibited or excluded from participation in what is rightfully theirs, we move toward liberation. Liberation opens the way for new ways of perceiving and defining success, fame, and esteem that include and enhance the many as opposed to the few.

Finally, our actions as part of prestige structures have consequences. We have an obligation as members of that religious tradition that believes in liberation to push against those forces that suppress and lift up those that liberate. Whether we are down under or on top, the obligation is there. "We are all part of another," and as such it behooves us to know how we engage ourselves in that part.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> William J. Goode, The Celebration of Heroes: Prestige as a Social Control System (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> Beverly Wildung Harrison, "The Power of Anger in the Work of Love: Christian Ethics for Women and Other Strangers," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 36 Supplementary Issue (1981) p. 51-52.

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